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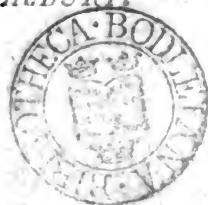






THE  
DOCTRINES  
AND  
DISCIPLINE  
OF THE  
Methodist Episcopal Church,  
IN  
*A M E R I C A.*  
WITH  
EXPLANATORY NOTES,  
BY  
*THOMAS COKE AND FRANCIS ASBURY.*

—  —  
THE TENTH EDITION.  
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*P H I L A D E L P H I A :*

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1798.

*110. k. 464.*

ence of a long series of years; as also on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern churches.

We wish to see this little publication in the house of every Methodist, and the more so as it contains our plan of Christian education, and the articles of religion maintained, more or less, in part or in the whole, by every reformed church in the world. We would likewise declare our real sentiments on the scripture doctrine of election and reprobation; on the infallible, unconditional perseverance of all who ever have believed, or ever shall; and on the doctrine of Christian perfection.

Far from wishing you to be ignorant of any of our doctrines, or any part of our discipline, we desire you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole. We know you are not in general able to purchase many books: But you ought, next to the word of God, to procure the Articles and Canons of the church to which you belong. This present edition is small and cheap, and we can assure you that the profits of the sale of it shall be applied to charitable purposes.

We remain your very affectionate brethren and pastors, who labour night and day, both in public and private, for your good,

THOMAS COKE,  
FRANCIS ASBURY.

BALTIMORE, }  
Nov. 16. 1792. }



### Advertisement to the Reader.

☞ *THE last General Conference desired the Bishops to draw up Annotations on the Form of Discipline, and to publish them with the present edition:—The Bishops have accordingly complied, and have proved or illustrated every thing by quotations from the Word of God, agreeably, also, to the advice of the Conference; and they sincerely pray that their labour of love may be made a blessing to many.*

1797.

## C H A P. I.



## S E C T I O N I.

*Of the Origin of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

**T**HE preachers and members of our society in general, being convinced that there was a great deficiency of vital religion in the church of England in America, and being in many places destitute of the christian sacraments, as several of the clergy had forsaken their churches, requested the late Rev. *John Wesley* to take such measures, in his wisdom and prudence, as would afford them suitable relief in their distress.

In consequence of this, our venerable friend, who, under God, had been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth, by the means of the Methodists, determined to ordain ministers for America; and for this purpose, in the year 1784, sent over three regularly ordained clergy: but preferring the episcopal mode of church-government to any other, he solemnly set apart, by the imposition of his hands, and prayer, one of them, viz. *Thomas Coke*, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus-college in the university of Oxford, and a presbyter of the church of England, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart *Francis Asbury*, then general assistant of the Methodist society in America, for the same episcopal office, he the said *Francis Asbury* being first ordained deacon and elder. In consequence of which, the said *Francis Asbury* was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said *Thomas Coke*, other regularly ordained ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the ge-

neral conference held at Baltimore, did unanimously receive the said *Thomas Coke* and *Francis Asbury* as their bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination.

## N O T E S.

It cannot be needful in this country, to vindicate the right of every christian society, to possess, within itself, all the privileges necessary or expedient for the comfort, instruction, or good government of the members thereof. The two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper have been allowed to be essential to the formation of a christian church, by every party and denomination in every age and country of christendom, with the exception only of a single modern society: and ordination by the imposition of hands has been allowed to be highly expedient, and has been practised as universally as the former. And these two points as above described, might, if need were, be confirmed by the Scriptures, and by the unanimous testimony of all the primitive fathers of the church for the three first centuries; and, indeed, by all the able divines who have written on the subject in the different languages of the world down to the present times.

The only point which can be disputed by any sensible person, is the *episcopal* form which we have adopted; and this can be contested by *candid* men, only from their want of acquaintance with the history of the church. The most bigotted devotees to religious establishments (the clergy of the church of Rome excepted) are now ashamed to support the doctrine of the *apostolic, uninterrupted succession of bishops*. Dr. Hoadley, bishop of Winchester, who was, we believe, the greatest advocate for episcopacy, whom the protestant churches ever produced, has been so completely overcome by Dr. Calamy, in respect to the uninterrupted succession, that the point has been entirely given up. Nor do we recollect that any writer of the protestant churches has since attempted to defend what all the learned world at present know to be utterly indefensible.

And yet nothing but an *apostolic, uninterrupted succession* can possibly confine the right of episcopacy to any particular church. The idea, that the supreme magistrate or legislature of a country, ought to be the head of the church in that nation, is a position, which, we think, no one here will presume to assert. It follows, therefore, indubitably, that every church has a right to choose, if it please, the *episcopal* plan.

The late reverend John Wesley recommended the *episcopal* form to his societies in America; and the general conference, which is

the chief synod of our church, unanimously accepted of it. Mr. Wesley did more. He first consecrated one for the office of a bishop, that our episcopacy might descend from himself. The general conference unanimously accepted of the person so consecrated, as well as of Francis Asbury, who had for many years before exercised every branch of the episcopal office, excepting that of ordination. Now, the idea of an apostolic succession being exploded, it follows, that the Methodist church has every thing which is scriptural and essential to justify its episcopacy. Is the unanimous approbation of the chief synod of a church necessary? This it has had. Is the ready compliance of the members of the church with its decision, in this respect, necessary? This it has had, and continues to have. Is it highly expedient, that the fountain of the episcopacy should be respectable? This has been the case. The most respectable divine since the primitive ages, if not since the time of the apostles, was Mr. Wesley. His knowledge of the sciences was very extensive. He was a general scholar: and for any to call his learning in question, would be to call their own. On his death the literati of England bore testimony to his great character. And where has been the individual so useful in the spread of religion? But in this we can appeal only to the lovers of *vital* godliness. By his long and incessant labours he raised a multitude of societies, who looked up to him for direction: and certainly his directions in things lawful, with the full approbation of the people, were sufficient to give authenticity to what was accordingly done. He was peculiarly attached to the laws and customs of the church in the primitive times of christianity. He knew, that the primitive churches universally followed the episcopal plan: and indeed bishop Hoadley has demonstrated that the episcopal plan was universal till the time of the reformation. Mr. Wesley therefore preferred the *episcopal* form of church government; and God has (glory be to his name!) wonderfully blessed it amongst us.

To the observations above made, we would add, that it must be evident to every discerning reader of the epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, that *Timothy*, who was appointed by St. Paul, bishop of the Ephesians, and *Titus*, who was appointed by the same apostle, bishop of the Cretians, were bishops in the proper *episcopal* sense, and that they were *travelling* bishops. The *episcopal* office in all its parts was invested in them. *Timothy* is charged (1) to be attentive to the teachers, respecting the purity of their doctrine, and to regulate every thing with due authority: "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus,—that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine, &c." 1 Tim. i. 3, &c. "these things command and teach." iv. 11. (2) To *superintend* the elders of the church: "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father," v. 1. "let the elders that rule well, be counted

worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine," ver. 17. "against an *elder* receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others may fear," &c. ver. 19. 21. (3) To lay on hands for the ministry: "Lay hands suddenly on no man," ver. 22 (4) To choose men for the preaching of the gospel: "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, *who shall be able to teach others also*," 2 Tim. ii. 2. And throughout these two epistles, *St. Paul* addresses himself to *Timothy* as one who had the chief superintendence over the private members of his church, and in all the affairs thereof. He also authorizes *Titus* to ordain elders (a peculiar part of the *episcopal* office) and to regulate every thing: "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee," Titus i. 5.

Nor is it less evident, that the seven angels of the seven churches of Asia Minor (the seven stars held in the right hand of Christ) mentioned in the 2d and 3d chapters of the Revelation, possessed all the parts and requisites of the *episcopal* office. For our Lord would never have addressed those epistles, which so deeply concerned the interests of those churches, to *single individuals*, if those *single individuals* had not been, by the superior offices with which they were invested, proper representatives of those churches respectively. We must also observe, that each of those churches belonged to a great metropolitan\* city, to which many other cities, towns, and villages, were considered as adjoined: so that as *Titus*, bishop of Crete, was required to "ordain elders and to set in order the things that were wanting, *in every city*" in the Isle of Crete, so the other bishops (as soon as possible) had each an extensive diocese, through which they travelled, and over which they superintended.

Nor must we omit to observe, that each diocese had a college of elders or presbyters, in which the bishop presided. So that the bishop by no means superintended his diocese in a despotic manner, but was rather the chief executor of those regulations, which were made in the college of presbyters, which answered to the convocations, synods, or conferences of all the well-organized churches in modern times.

But in all we have observed on this subject, we by no means intend to speak disrespectfully of the presbyterian church, or of any other: we only desire to defend our own from the unjust calumnies of its opponents.

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\* The chief city of a nation.

## SECTION II.

# Articles of Religion.

### I. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.

**T**HERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this God-head, there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity;—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

#### NOTES.

This article is proved from the following scriptures, viz. (1) John iv. 24. God is a spirit. Ephes. iii. 9. God, who created all things by Jesus Christ. (2) John i. 14. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. viii. 54. Jesus answered—it is my Father that honoureth me. x. 29. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all. (3) John i. 1. The Word was God. Isai. 9. 6. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called *The mighty God*. John xx. 28. Thomas said unto him [Christ] my Lord and my God. Acts xx. 28. Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Rom. ix. 5. Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Phil. ii. 6. Who [Christ Jesus] being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Tit. ii. 13. The glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 8. Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. 1 John v. 20. His Son Jesus Christ: This is the true God, and eternal life. (4) John xiv. 26. The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost,—shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. xv. 26. When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father;—he shall testify of me. xvi. 8. When he [the Comforter] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (5) 1 John v. 7. There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Luke 3. 22. The *Holy Ghost* descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon *him* [Christ] and a *voice* came from heaven, which said, Thou art *my beloved Son*; in thee I am well pleased. 2 Cor. xiii. 14. The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, and the love of God, and the communion of the *Holy Ghost*, be with you all. Amen.

## II. *Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made very Man.*

**T**HE Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the God-head and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

### N O T E S.

This article is proved by many of the above-quoted as well as by the following scriptures, viz. (1) John i. 14. And the Word [who was God, *ver. 1.*] was made *flesh*. Phil. ii. 7, 8. Christ Jesus, [who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, *ver. 5, 6.*] was made *in the likeness of men*; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest *in the flesh*. (2) Col. i. 14. In whom [God's dear Son] we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Ephes. ii. 13, 16. Now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace,—that he might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Who [Christ Jesus] gave himself a ransom for all.

## III. *Of the Resurrection of Christ.*

**C**HRIST did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascend-



ed into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

### N O T E S.

Matt. xxviii. 6. He [Jesus] is not here; for he is *risen*, as he said. Luke xxiv. 39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see: for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. Mark xvi. 19. After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

## IV. *Of the Holy Ghost.*

**T**HE Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

### N O T E S.

(1) John xiv. 16, 17. I will pray *the Father*, and he shall give you *another Comforter*, that he may abide with you for ever, even *the Spirit* of truth. John xiv. 26. *The Comforter*, which is *the Holy Ghost*, whom *the Father* will send in my name, &c. (2) Rom. viii. 9. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that *the Spirit of God* dwell in you: now if any man have not *the Spirit of Christ*, he is none of his. Gal. iv. 6. Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit of his Son* into your hearts. (3) 2 Cor. iii. 3. *The Spirit of the living God*. 2 Cor. iii. 17. Now *the Lord* is *that Spirit*; and where *the Spirit of the Lord* is, there is liberty. 1 Pet. iv. 14. *The Spirit of glory and of God* resteth upon you.

## V. *The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*

**H**OLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those

canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

*The Names of the Canonical Books,*

**G** E N E S I S,  
 Exodus,  
 Leviticus,  
 Numbers,  
 Deuteronomy,  
 Joshua,  
 Judges,  
 Ruth,  
 The First Book of Samuel,  
 The Second Book of Samuel,  
 The First Book of Kings,  
 The Second Book of Kings,  
 The First Book of Chronicles,  
 The Second Book of Chronicles,  
 The Book of Ezra,  
 The Book of Nehemiah,  
 The Book of Esther,  
 The Book of Job,  
 The Psalms,  
 The Proverbs,  
 Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,  
 Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,  
 Four Prophets the greater,  
 Twelve Prophets the less :

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

N O T E S.

2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Pet. i. 19, 20, 21. We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts :

knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old-time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. *Isai. viii. 20.* To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to *this word*, it is because there is *no light* in them. *1 Pet. iv. 11.* If any man speak, let him speak *as the oracles of God.* *Psalms cxix. 72.* The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. *Ver. 97.* O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. *Psalms cxxxviii. 2.* Thou hast magnified *thy word above all thy name.*

By the word *canonical* is meant *whatsoever* respects, or is confirmed by, the laws of the church; and here it particularly refers to the decisions of the councils in the *first* and *purest* ages of christianity concerning the holy scriptures; in which times the inspired writings were collected into one volume. The scriptures of the *Old Testament* had indeed been published in one volume long before by the Jews; but the scriptures of the *New* were then added to them.

We could enter minutely into the proofs of the divine authority of each book, both of the Old and New Testament, and into an account of the times in which they were written, and the persons by whom: but it would require a treatise of itself, to do justice to so extensive a subject.

## VI. *Of the Old Testament.*

THE Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore, they are not to be heard, who feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments, which are called moral.

### N O T E S.

(1) Luke xxiv. 27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he [Christ] expounded unto them, *in all the scriptures*, the

things concerning himself. John v. 39. *Search the scriptures* [of the Old Testament, which alone were then in being] for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they, *which testify of me*. (2) Job xix. 25—27. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. Psalm xvii. 15. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness. (3) Matt. xxii. 40. On these two commandments [the love of God, and love of man] hang *all the law and the prophets*. Matt. vii. 12. All things, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is *the law and the prophets*.

## VII. Of Original or Birth Sin.

**O**RIGINAL sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

### N O T E S.

Gen. vi. 5. God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth; and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Jer. xvii. 9. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Psalm xiv. 3. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Psalm liii. 3. Every one of them is gone back; they are a together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Rom. iii. 10. As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. Psalm li. 5. Behold, I was *shapen* in iniquity, and in sin did my mother *conceive* me. Eph. ii. 1—3. And you hath he quickened, who were *dead in trespasses and sins*: wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation, in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were, *by nature, the children of wrath*, even as others. Mark vii. 21—23.

From within, out of *the heart* of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness : all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

### VIII. *Of Free-Will.*

**T**HE condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God : Wherefore, we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

#### N O T E S.

(1) 2 Cor. iii. 5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. Eph. ii. 5. Even when we were dead in sins [God] hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved.) Ver. 8, 9. By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God : not of works, lest any man should boast. (2) John xv. 5. Without me [Christ] ye can do nothing. Phil. ii. 12, 13. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.

### IX. *Of the Justification of Man.*

**W**E are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings :—Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

#### N O T E S.

(1) Rom. iii. 24—26. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to de-

declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. v. 18. Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. x. 4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (2) Psalm xxxii. 1. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

## X. *Of Good-Works.*

**A**LTHOUGH good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, inasmuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit.

## N O T E S.

(1) Gal. v. 6. In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which *worketh* by love. James ii. 22. Seest thou how faith wrought with his [Abraham's] *works*; and by *works* was faith made perfect. Ver. 26. As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without *works* is dead also. (2) Heb. xiii. 16. To do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. James i. 27. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows, in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Tit. iii. 8. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou *affirm constantly*, that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain *good works*.

## XI. *Of Works of Supererogation:*

**V**OLUNTARY works, besides over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogance and impiety. For by them men do declare, That they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: Whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

### N O T E S.

Job xxii. 2, 3. Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect? 1 Cor. iv. 7. Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, which thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it? Tit. iii. 5. *Not by works of righteousness*, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

## XII. *Of Sin after Justification.*

**N**OT every sin willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again; and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

(1) 2 Sam. xii. 13. David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Matt. xxvi. 75. Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly [and Peter certainly was pardoned.] (2) Jer. iii. 22. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Hosea xiv. 4. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. 1 John ii. 1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: and if *any man* sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

### XIII. *Of the Church.*

THE visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

#### N O T E S.

Matt. xviii. 20. Where *two or three* are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Rom. xvi. 5. Greet *the church*, which is in *their house*. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. *The churches of Asia* salute you. 1 Cor. xi. 18. When *ye* come together in *the church*, &c.

### XIV. *Of Purgatory.*

THE Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of scripture, but repugnant to the word of God.

#### N O T E S.

(1) Exod. xx. 4, 5. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the



earth: *thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, &c.* Matt. iv. 10. Jesus said unto him,—It is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve.' Col. ii. 18. Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility, and *worshipping* of angels, &c. 1 Tim. ii. 5. There is one God, and *one* Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. Rev. xix. 10. I [John] fell at his feet to *worship* him; and he said unto me, *See thou do it not*; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. *Worship God.* Rev. xxii. 8, 9. I fell down to *worship* before 'the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.' Then saith he unto me, *See thou do it not*, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. *Worship God.* (2) Luke xvi. 26. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed, *so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot: neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.* John viii. 21. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye *cannot* come. (3) Mark. ii. 5, &c. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, *Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?* And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit, that they so reasoned within themselves [he did not deny the justness of their reasoning, in ascribing to God *only* the power of forgiving sins, but] he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that *the Son of man* [he does not add, *and the pope and his priests*] hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, arise and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, &c. See also Matt. ix. 2, &c. and Luke v. 18, &c.

## XV. *Of speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understand.*

**I**T is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

1 Cor. xiv. 11. If I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh, a barbarian; and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me. Ver. 14. *If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.* Ver. 16. When thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at *the giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest.* Ver. 19. In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, than by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. See the whole chapter.

## XVI. *Of the Sacraments.*

**S**ACRAMENTS ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of christian men's profession: but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord, in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments; that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the *corrupt* following of the Apostles; and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

## N O T E S.

(1) Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. Acts ii. 38. Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins. viii. 12. When they believed Philip preaching,—they were baptized, both men and women. Ver. 16. As yet he [the Holy Ghost] was fallen on none of them, only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. xvi. 15. When she [Lydia] was baptized, and her household, &c. xix. 5. They were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus. xxii. 16. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, &c. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. I Cor. i. 16. I baptized also the household of Stephanus. I Pet. iii. 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. (2) Luke xxii. 19. He [Jesus] took bread and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: *this do in remembrance of me.* I Cor. xi. 24—26. When he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: *this do in remembrance of me.* After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; *this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.* For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death, till he come. Chap. x. 16. The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? (3) chap. xi. 27. Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. See also the 29th verse.

In respect to the five additional sacraments, which the church of Rome has been pleased to adopt, there is not the least imaginable authority from the word of God to consider them as such. They want the essential requisites of a sacrament; and have been imposed on a considerable part of mankind by a most corrupt priesthood, whose only aim was to enrich and aggrandize themselves.

And from the same corrupt fountain sprung the gaudy, superstitious custom of carrying about the Host, that the poor blinded multitude might gaze at it, and worship it, to the degradation of human nature, as well as the dishonor of God.

XVII. *Of Baptism.*

**B**APTISM is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.

## N O T E S.

Matt. iii. 11. I [John the Baptist] indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me,—*shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.* John iii. 5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and *of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Mark x. 13—16. They brought young children to him [Christ] that he should touch them, and his disciples rebuked those that brought them; but when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.—And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

The preceding scripture evidently demonstrates, that the *little children* were entitled to all the privileges of *the kingdom of glory*, and, of necessary consequence, to all the privileges of *the kingdom of grace*. They must, therefore, be entitled to the benefit of *that ordinance*, which initiates the members of Christ's kingdom into his church below. See also the texts, concerning baptism, on the preceding article, particularly those which respect the baptizing of whole households or families.

XVIII. *Of the Lord's Supper.*

**T**HE Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch, that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

#### N O T E S.

Matt. xxvi. 28. This is *my blood* of the New Testament, which *is shed* for many, for the remission of sins. Mark xiv. 24. This is *my blood* of the New Testament, which *is shed* for many. Luke xxii. 19. This is *my body*, which *is given* for you. 1 Cor. xi. 24. This is *my body*, which *is broken* for you. v. 7. For even *Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us*. See the texts on the 16th article.

In respect to the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the change of the bread and wine in the Lord's supper into the *real* body and blood of Christ, so that the divinity as well as humanity of Christ is contained in the transubstantiated elements, we have little hopes of convincing those of their error, who can hold so absurd a notion. If they can credit the assertion, that a man can put his God into his mouth and swallow him down his throat, or that he can even swallow the whole humanity of the blessed Jesus, "whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things,"\* they must indeed be prepared to receive any error, which a corrupt and interested clergy may think proper to impose upon them, however absurd or monstrous it may be. Nor do we know of any opinion of the heathen mythologists, concerning their Jupiters, Junos, and Venuses, so astonishingly monstrous as the doctrine of transubstantiation.

At the same time, we are well assured that the true believer does, in a *spiritual* manner, feed upon the body and blood of Jesus Christ. and in this *spiritual* sense we take those words of our Lord, John vi. 51—58. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I

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\* Acts iii. 21.

will give for the life of the world.—Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him :” and faith is the grand instrument, whereby we thus *spiritually* discern the Lord’s body, and *spiritually* eat his flesh, and drink his blood.

## XIX. *Of both Kinds.*

THE cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people: for both the parts of the Lord’s Supper, by Christ’s ordinance and commandment ought to be administered to all christians alike.

### N O T E S.

It is indubitable, from the 11th chapter of St. Paul’s 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, that the Lord’s supper was administered in *both* kinds to all the communicants in the apostolic age. The apostle, addressing himself to *the Corinthians*, observes in the 20th, 21st, and 22d verses, “When ye come together, therefore, into one place, this it not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating, every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?” Here St. Paul does not complain of their *drinking the wine* at the Lord’s supper, which he certainly would, if the cup was to be confined to the ministers; but of their both *eating and drinking* most intemperately. He adds, in the 26th verse, &c. “As often as ye [*Corinthians*] eat this bread, and *drink this cup*, ye do shew the Lord’s death, till he come. Wherefore, *whosoever* shall eat this bread, and *drink this cup* of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man [any christian, not a priest only, for neither priest nor minister is here mentioned] examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and *drink of that cup*,” &c. The whole passage removes all possibility of dispute, where the scripture is the rule of judgment. And indeed the refusal of the cup to the people is, even in the church of Rome, of very late date: however, it shews much of that wisdom which is from beneath; for it requires much more faith to believe in the transubstantiation of *the wine* after consecration, than of *the wafer* which has little or no taste.

## XX. *Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross.*

THE offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

### N O T E S.

Heb. vii. 26, 27. Such an high priest became us,—who *needeth not daily* as those high priests [of the tribe of Levi] to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: *for this he did once*, when he offered up himself. Heb. x. 11—14. Every priest standeth *daily* ministering and offering *oftentimes the same sacrifices*, which can never take away sins: But this man [Christ] after he had offered *one* sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.—For by *one* offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. John xix. 30. He [Jesus] said, *It is finished*; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The sacrifice of masses, in which Christ is supposed to be offered again, is wholly grounded on the doctrine of transubstantiation: and it must be granted, that if the wafer after consecration, be the *real* body of Christ, the priest may offer it, or crucify it, or do what he please with it.

## XXI. *Of the Marriage of Ministers.*

THE ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

### N O T E S.

1 Tim. iv. 1—3. Now, *the Spirit speaketh expressly*, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to se-

ducing spirits, and *doctrines of devils*;—*forbidding to marry, &c.* 1 Cor. ix. 5. Have we not power to lead about a *sister, a wife*, as well as *other apostles*, and as *the brethren of the Lord*, and *Cephas*? Heb. xiii. 4. Marriage is *honourable in all*.

## XXII. *Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches.*

**I**T is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike, for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word.—Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

### N O T E S.

(1) Heb. xiii. 17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief. 1 Cor. xi. 16. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. (2) Rom. ii. 8. Unto them that are *contentious*, indignation and wrath. xvi. 17, 18. Now, I beseech you, brethren, *mark them which cause divisions and offences*, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid them*. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. 1 Cor. i. 10. Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in



the same judgment. iii. 3. *Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* Tit. iii. 9. *Avoid—contentions.* (3) 1 Cor. xiv. 33. God is not the author of *confusion*, but of *peace*, as in all churches of the saints. Ver. 40. Let all things be done decently, and *in order*. Col. ii. 5. Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, *joying and beholding your order*.

From these texts, we may observe,

1. That the word of God requires, that the members of a church should shew obedience and submission to those who have the pastoral care and superintendence over them. In *essential* points they should make no sacrifice to the judgment of others: but in *unessential* matters (as all rites and ceremonies are, which are not repugnant to the word of God) *they are required to obey, and submit to, their chief pastors*. And if the contentious are determined to censure this doctrine, they must lay the blame at the proper door, and criminate the scriptures themselves.

2. The texts which are produced, to shew the great sin and dreadful consequences of strife, contention, and division, should place every good man on his guard against a practice so injurious to the work of God. Well is Satan represented as the spirit of division! It is the great work of Christ to unite God to man, and man to man; and the great work of the devil to divide man from God, and man from man. And, alas! this great enemy of mankind has been but too successful!—so successful, that we doubt whether greater injury has not been done, in the different ages of the world, to the cause of religion, by this grand engine of the evil one, than by all the gross vices committed by mankind! The unregenerate are under the wrath of God, whether they be formalists or open sinners: but *the spirit of division* enters within the veil—enters into the sanctuary, and eats up the very vitals of religion: it changes the peace and concord and union of religious societies, into jealousy, evil surmisings, malice, and envy: and too often concludes with every evil word and work.

3. And how is it possible to bring the discipline of a church to any degree of perfection, or even to preserve that order in it, which is essentially necessary for its peace and prosperity, if every member has a right to oppose or despise its laws, and to set up his judgment or fancy against the united wisdom of those, who, by common consent, have exercised the government thereof? It is this miserable spirit which has broken the most lively christian societies into parties, and given their enemies such plausible grounds to despise and ridicule the great truths of experimental religion. O that the Prince of peace and concord may preserve us from this schismatic spirit!

## XXIII. *Of the Rulers of the United States of America.*

**T**HE president, the congress, the general assemblies, the governors, and the councils of state, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the general act of confederation, and by the constitutions of their respective states. And the said states ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

### N O T E S.

Rom. xiii. 1—7. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For, for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all, their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour. Tit. iii. 1, Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates. 2 Pet. ii. 9—11. The Lord knoweth how—to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: but *chiefly them* that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and *despise government*. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, *they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*; whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. Jude 8. Likewise, also, these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, *despise dominion*, and *speak evil of dignities*. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men,——and *for all that are in authority*.

XXIV. *Of Christian Men's Goods.*

**T**HE riches and goods of christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

## N O T E S.

(1) Acts v. 3, 4. Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, *was it not thine own?* and after it was sold, *was it not in thine own power?* 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. Charge them that are rich in this world [not, that they throw their property into a common stock with the other members of the church, to which they belong, but] that they do good, that they be *rich in good works*, ready to distribute, willing to communicate. (2) Matt: xxv. 34—40. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.—Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

XXV. *Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

**A**S we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his apostle; so we judge that the christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

(1) Matt. v. 34—37. I say unto you, Swear not at all:— But let your *communication* be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil. Jam. v. 12. Above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let *your yea be yea*; and *your nay, nay*; lest ye fall into condemnation. (2) Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. The high priest answered, and said unto him, *I adjure thee by the living God*, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: [or, as St. Mark expresses it ch. xiv. 62.] Jesus said, I am. [Jesus answered the high priest on being solemnly adjured or *sworn* by him *in the name of the living God*; though he would not answer him, when questioned without an oath: and we may also observe, that the Jews always considered themselves *upon oath*, when thus adjured by the high priest. Why then should our Saviour give sanction to an oath by answering the adjuration, if no person ought to swear or take an oath before a magistrate?] 2 Cor. i. 18. *As God is true*, our word toward you was not yea and nay. Ver. 23. Moreover, *I call God for a record upon my soul*, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Gal. i. 20. Now, the things which I write unto you, behold, *before God*, I lye not. [St. Paul, in each of these instances, calls *God to witness* the truth which he asserted, which has in it the nature and properties of a *solemn oath*.] Heb. vi. 13. When God made promise to Abraham, *because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself*. Ver. 16, 17. For men verily swear by the greater: and an *oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife*. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.

When we candidly compare together the texts quoted above, we do not see the possibility of reconciling them, but by allowing, on the one hand, that it is sinful (it “cometh of evil”) to use any asseveration in common discourse, stronger than the simple *yes* and *no*; and, on the other hand, that it is *perfectly lawful* to *make oath*, before the magistrate, on all important occasions.

Nevertheless, we do not object to any of our brethren, who still have doubts on this subject, and demand, where it can be obtained, an affirmation instead of an oath.

## SECTION III.

### *Of the General and Yearly Conferences.*

IT is desired that all things be considered on these occasions, as in the immediate presence of God: That every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

*Quest.* 1. How may we best improve our time at the conferences?

*Ans.* 1. While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

2. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

3. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labour.

*Quest.* 2. Who shall compose the general conference?

*Ans.* All the travelling preachers who shall be in full connection at the time of holding the conference.

*Quest.* 3. Who shall attend the yearly conferences?

*Ans.* All the travelling preachers who are in full connection, and those who are to be received into full connection.

*Quest.* 4. Who shall appoint the times of holding the yearly conferences?

*Ans.* The bishops.

*Quest.* 5. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in the yearly conferences?

*Ans.* We inquire,

1. What preachers are admitted on trial?
2. Who remain on trial?
3. Who are admitted into full connection?
4. Who are the deacons?
5. Who are the elders?
6. Who have been elected by the unanimous suffrages of the general conference to exercise the episcopal office, and superintend the Methodist episcopal church in America?
7. Who are under a location, through weakness of body, or family concerns?
8. Who are the supernumeraries? \*
9. Who have died this year?

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\* A supernumerary preacher is one so worn out in the itinerant service, as to be rendered incapable of preaching constantly: but, at the same time, is willing to do any work in the ministry, which the conference may direct, and his strength enable him to perform.

10. Are all the preachers blameless in life and conversation?
11. Who are expelled from the connection?
12. Where are the preachers stationed this year?
13. What numbers are in society?
14. What has been collected for the contingent expences?
15. How has this been expended?
16. What is contributed towards the fund for the superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of the preachers?
17. What demands are there upon it?
18. Where and when shall our next conference be held?

*Quest.* 6. Is there any other business to be done in the yearly conferences?

*Answ.* The electing and ordaining of elders and deacons.

*Quest.* 7. Are there any other directions to be given concerning the yearly conferences?

*Answ.* There shall be six conferences in the year: as follows, viz.

1st, The New-England conference,—under the direction of which shall be the affairs of our church in New-England, and in that part of the state of New-York, which lies on the east side of Hudson's river: *Provided*, That if the bishops see it necessary, a conference may be held in the Province of Maine.

2. The Philadelphia conference, for the direction of our concerns in the remainder of the state of New-York, in New-Jersey, in all that part of Pennsylvania which lies on the east side of the Susquehannah river, the state of Delaware, and all the rest of the peninsula.

3. The Baltimore conference, for the remainder of Pennsylvania, the remainder of Maryland, and the Northern neck of Virginia.

4. The Virginia conference, for all that part of Virginia which lies on the south side of the Rappahannock river, and for all that part of North-Carolina which lies on the north side of Cape-Fear river, includ-

ing also the circuits which are situated on the branches of the Yadkin.

5. The South-Carolina conference, for South-Carolina, Georgia, and the remainder of North-Carolina.

6. The western conference, for the states of Kentucky and Tennessee; *Provided*, That the bishops shall have authority to appoint other yearly conferences in the interval of the general conference, if a sufficiency of new circuits be any where formed for that purpose.

*Quest.* 8. How are the districts to be formed?

*Ans.* According to the judgment of the bishop.

N. B. In case that there be no bishop to travel through the districts, and exercise the episcopal office, on account of death, the districts shall be regulated in every respect by the yearly conferences and the presiding elders, till the ensuing general conference, (ordinations only excepted).

## N O T E S.

It is indispensably necessary for every great body of people, whether united by civil or religious bonds, to have among them a select number, invested with the authority of making regulations, for the government of the society. It is of small importance by what name this select body is distinguished. The name which our venerable father in the gospel, the late Mr. Wesley, preferred, in respect to our society, was that of *Conference*, and we have, therefore, continued to use it. Indeed *the name* is perfectly scriptural. In the Acts of the Apostles we are informed, that Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to consult the apostles and elders, in respect to the dispute concerning circumcision. But after they had delivered their message, "and declared all things that God had done with them,—there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees, which believed, saying, that it was needful to circumcise them [the gentiles] and to command them to keep the law of Moses." See the 15th chapter of the Acts. This very meeting is called, by St Paul, Gal. ii. 1—10. a *conference*. "For they who seemed to be somewhat in *conference* added nothing to me." It is impossible for any discerning person who attentively compares the two chapters together, not to see that *the conference* here spoken of respected the meeting of the apostles and elders with Paul and Barnabas, on the above occasion: and

St. Paul seems to use the word as if it was well known, and frequently applied to such meetings.

Our societies are scattered over a vast country, extending about fourteen hundred miles from north to south, and from five to eight hundred from east to west. We could not, therefore, in justice to the work of God, nor from the state of our finances, hold our general conferences oftener than once in four years. If they were more frequent, the long absence of so many ministers from their respective circuits and districts, would be an irreparable loss to the societies and congregations. Nor do we think, that the nature of a religious constitution renders it necessary to revise more frequently the regulations by which it is governed. But there are various particulars, which do not come under the name of laws, which require more frequent assemblies or conferences for their consideration. The admission of preachers on trial and into full connection, the ordination of elders and deacons, the examination of the characters of the ministers and preachers, and the stationing of them all, as well as the management of the fund for the superannuated preachers, &c. are points of the first moment, and call for frequent meetings. On this account, the general conference has appointed yearly conferences, divided in the best manner they were able; to be composed, as far as possible, of at least one bishop—the president elder of each district within the controul of those conferences, respectively—the elders, deacons, and the preachers in full connection. These men, who have been travelling the preceding year among all the societies in those districts and circuits, respectively, can give the fullest, the completest information on all the subjects which come under the cognizance of the yearly conferences.

But it may be asked, Why are not *delegates* sent to these conferences from each of the circuits? We answer, It would utterly destroy our *itinerant plan*. They would be concerned chiefly, if not only, for the interests of their own constituents. They could not be expected, from *the nature of things*, to make the necessary sacrifices, and to enter impartially into *the good of the whole*. They would necessarily endeavour to obtain the most able and lively preachers for their respective circuits, without entering, perhaps at all, into that enlarged, apostolic spirit, which would endeavour, whatever might be the sacrifice, to make all things *tally*. The difference of gifts in the ministers, and the opposing interests of the delegates, would produce conflicts, of a pernicious tendency; and, in many instances, improper means would be used for obtaining the desired point. Frequently the delegates, if unsuccessful in their application for their favourite preacher, would probably make him secret offers to settle among them; and if unsuccessful in every point, and the preacher, ap-



pointed for them and their constituents, was not agreeable to their wishes, they might grow indignant, and, through repentment, and by their unfavourable reports, on their return, might cause a separation from the general body. And those who imagine this to be a mere chimera, shew, we think, but little knowledge of human nature: they do not consider how easily and powerfully the heated passions would plead in favour of a settled ministry—how easily disappointment and jealousy would present the purest and most disinterested conduct in the most unfavourable light: to say nothing of the labour and expence of such a plan. Whilst, on the other hand, the present members who compose our conferences, who know not, when they meet, what may be their next sphere of action, and are willing to run any where on the errands of their Lord, are not nearly as much exposed to the temptations mentioned above.\*

The following portions of the Word of God are pointed in support of the itinerant plan for the propagation of the gospel; which plan renders most of the regulations contained in this section, essential to the existence of our united society: Matt. x. 5—11. "These twelve [apostles] Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go—to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. And into *whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire,*" &c. xxii. 8—10. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the *high-ways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.* So those servants went out into the *highways,*" &c. xxviii. 19. "Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations,*" be as extensively useful as possible. Mark vi. 7—12. "And he call-eth unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two, — and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, *save a staff only.*—And he said unto them, *In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide, till ye depart from that place.*—And *they went out, and preached*

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\* *We are very far from making these remarks out of any disrespect to our located brethren. On the contrary, we are very conscious that many of them equal any of us, and perhaps much exceed us in grace and wisdom. We have made these observations only on account of their located situation, well knowing that our people would on no occasion choose any for their delegates who were not wise and good men. But such is the nature of man, and perhaps such is the duty of man, that he will always prefer the people for whom he acts, and to whom he is responsible, before all others. We should, probably, act in the same manner ourselves, if we were delegates for a single circuit or district.*

that men should repent." Luke x. 1—9. "After these things, the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face *into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*—And into *whatsoever house ye enter,*" says our Lord to them, "first say, Peace be to this house.—And into *whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you,—say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh-unto you.*" xiv. 23. "And the Lord said unto the servant, *Go out into the high-ways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.*" Acts. viii. 4. "They that were scattered abroad *went every where preaching the word.*" Ver. 40 "Philip—preached *in all the cities, till he came to Cefarea.*" xvi 36. "Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go *again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord,*" &c.

We have already shewn, that *Timothy and Titus were travelling bishops.* In short, every candid person, who is thoroughly acquainted with the New Testament, must allow, that whatever excellencies other plans may have, *this is the primitive and apostolic plan.* But we would by no means speak with disrespect of the faithful *located* ministers of any church. We doubt not, but, from the nature and circumstances of things, there must have been many located ministers in the primitive churches: and we must acknowledge, with gratitude to God, that the *located* brethren in our church are truly useful and of considerable consequence, in their respective stations. But, on the other hand, we are so conscious of the vast importance of the *travelling plan*, that we are determined, through the grace of God, to support it to the utmost of our power: nor will any plea which can possibly be urged, however plausible it may appear, or under whatever name proposed, induce us to make the least sacrifice in this respect, or, by the introduction of any novelty, to run the least hazard of wounding *that plan*, which God has so wonderfully owned, and which is so perfectly consistent with the apostolic and primitive practice.

We will now humbly beg leave to drop a few *hints* (for laws or regulations we have no authority to make) *as explanatory* of those words in the introduction to this section, "It is desired, that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart:" and we propose them the more readily, as they are extracted from the minutes drawn up by our elder brethren, the members of the British conference:

1. Be tender of the character of every brother; but keep at the utmost distance from countenancing sin.
2. Say nothing in the conference but what is strictly necessary, and to the point.
3. If accused by any one, remember recrimination is no acquittance; therefore avoid it.

4. Beware of impatience of contradiction; be firm; but be open to conviction. The cause is God's, and he needs not the hands of an Uzzah to support his ark. The being too tenacious of a point, because you brought it forward, may be only feeding self. Be quite easy, if a majority decide against you.

5. Use no craft or guile to gain any point. Genuine simplicity will always support itself. But there is no need always to say all you know or think.

6. Beware of too much confidence in your own abilities; and never despise an opponent.

7. Avoid all lightness of spirit, even what would be innocent any where else.——Thou, God, seest me.

The appointment of *the times* for holding the *yearly* conferences must necessarily be invested in the bishops, otherwise they cannot possibly form their plans for travelling through the continent, so that they may be enabled to attend each of the conferences. But the right of fixing *the places* rests with the conferences.

We cannot omit noticing, before we conclude this section, the strict examination which the characters of the preachers pass through, in the yearly conferences. When that eminent saint of God, and great writer, John Fletcher, was once present, in the British conference, at the examination of the characters, he seemed astonished, and expressed his surprize and approbation in very strong terms. The examination is equally strict in all the conferences throughout the connection. And we know of no church where the purity of the morals, the orthodoxy of the doctrines, and the usefulness of the lives and labours of the ministers (for all these are included in the examination) are more strictly attended to than in ours.

In respect to the division of the continent, for the purpose of holding the yearly conferences, we may observe, that for several years the annual conferences were very small, consisting only of the preachers of a single district, or of two or three very small ones. This was attended with many inconveniences.——1. There were but few of the senior preachers, whose years and experience had matured their judgments, who could be present at any one conference. 2. The conferences wanted that dignity which every religious synod should possess, and which always accompanies a *large* assembly of Gospel ministers. 3. The itinerant plan was exceedingly cramped, from the difficulty of removing preachers from one district to another. All these inconveniences will, we trust, be removed on the present plan; and at the same time the conferences are so arranged, that all the members, respectively, may attend with little difficulty.

To all which may be added, that the active, zealous, unmarried preachers, may move on a larger scale, and preach the ever-

blesed gospel far more extensively through the sixteen states, and other parts of the continent ; whilst the married preachers, whose circumstances require them. in many instances, to be more located than the single men, will have a considerable field of action opened to them ; and also the bishops will be able to attend the conferences with greater ease, and without injury to their health.

The regulation concerning those who are to attend the conferences, is made, that our societies and congregations may be supplied with preaching during the conferences. We would, therefore, wish to have a few of the travelling preachers among our dear flocks at those times. But as we desire to make the conferences as respectable and weighty as possible, we can spare none at those important seasons, except the preachers upon trial. They, also, will be absent from the yearly conferences only for one year, as they must be present on the second to be admitted into full connection.

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the Election and Consecration of Bishops, and of their Duty.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW is a bishop to be constituted in future ?

*Ans.* By the election of the general conference, and the laying on of the hands of three bishops, or at least of one bishop and two elders.

*Quest. 2.* If by death, expulsion, or otherwise, there be no bishop remaining in our church, what shall we do ?

*Ans.* The general conference shall elect a bishop ; and the elders, or any three of them, who shall be appointed by the general conference for that purpose, shall ordain him according to our office of ordination.

*Quest. 3.* What is the bishop's duty ?

*Ans.* 1. To preside in our conferences.

2. To fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits.

3. In the intervals of the conferences, to change, re-  
cative, or suspend preachers, as necessity may require.

4. To travel through the connection at large.

5. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the societies.

6. To ordain bishops, elders, and deacons.

*Quest.* 4. To whom is the bishop amenable for his conduct?

*Ans.* To the general conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

*Quest.* 5. What provision shall be made for the trial of an immoral bishop, in the interval of the general conference?

*Ans.* If a bishop be guilty of immorality, three travelling elders shall call upon him, and examine him on the subject; and if the three elders verily believe that the bishop is guilty of the crime, they shall call to their aid two presiding elders from two districts in the neighbourhood of that where the crime was committed, each of which presiding elders shall bring with him two elders, or an elder and a deacon. The above mentioned nine persons shall form a conference, to examine into the charge brought against the bishop: and if two thirds of them verily believe him to be guilty of the crime laid to his charge, they shall have authority to suspend the bishop till the ensuing general conference, and the districts shall be regulated in the mean time as is provided in the case of the death of a bishop.

*Quest.* 6. If the bishop cease from travelling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his office among us in any degree?

*Ans.* If he cease from travelling without the consent of the general conference, he shall not hereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in our church.

N. B. The bishops have obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the conference, to ordain local preachers to the office of deacons, provided they obtain a testimonial from the society to which they belong, and from the stewards of the circuit, signed also by three elders, three deacons, and three travelling preachers.

## N O T E S.

In considering the present subject, we must observe, that nothing has been introduced into Methodism by the present episcopal form of government, which was not before fully exercised by Mr. Wesley. He presided in the conferences; fixed the appointments of the preachers for their several circuits; changed, received, or suspended preachers, wherever he judged that necessity required it; travelled through the European connection at large; superintended the spiritual and temporal business; and consecrated two bishops, Thomas Coke and Alexander Mather, one before the present episcopal plan took place in America, and the other afterwards, besides ordaining elders and deacons. But the authority of Mr. Wesley and that of the bishops in America differ in the following important points:

1. Mr. Wesley was the patron of all the Methodist pulpits in Great Britain and Ireland *for life*, the sole right of nomination being invested in him by all the deeds of settlement, which gave him exceeding great power. But the bishops in America possess no such power. The property of the preaching-houses is invested in the trustees; and the right of nomination to the pulpits, in the general conference—and in such as the general conference shall, from time to time, appoint. This division of power in favour of the general conference was absolutely necessary. Without it the itinerant plan could not exist for any long continuance. The trustees would probably, in many instances, from their *located* situation, insist upon having their favourite preachers stationed in their circuits, or endeavour to prevail on the preachers themselves to *locate* among them, or choose some other settled minister for their chapels. In other cases, the trustees of preaching-houses in *different circuits* would probably insist upon having the *same* popular or favourite preachers.\* Here, then,

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\* We must repeat nearly the same observations concerning trustees, which we have in our notes on the last section, concerning the sending of delegates to our conferences. We have a great respect for our trustees. We consider them as men, to whom the connection is greatly obliged. They fill up an important province in our church, and have a claim to a high rank among us. Humanly speaking, the work could not be carried on without them to any extent in the cities and towns. Their responsibility for the debts of our buildings, and the disinterestedness which must necessarily influence them when they make themselves responsible, lay our societies under very great obligations. We both love and honour them. But still they are located men. They cannot be expected to act impartially for the whole. They will think it their duty, and perhaps it is their duty, to prefer the interests of their own congregations to any other. We should probably act in the same manner in their situation.

lies the grand difference between Mr. Wesley's authority, in the present instance, and that of our American bishops. The former, as (under God) the father of the connection, was allowed to have the *sole, legal, independent* nomination of preachers to all the chapels: the latter are *entirely dependent* on the general conference.

But why, may it be asked, does the general conference lodge the power of stationing the preachers in the episcopacy? We answer, On account of their entire confidence in it. If ever, through improper conduct, it loses that confidence in any considerable degree, the general conference will, upon evidence given, in a proportionable degree, take from it this branch of its authority. But if ever it evidently betrays a spirit of tyranny or partiality, and *this* can be proved before the general conference, the whole will be taken from it: and we pray God, that in such case the power may be invested in other hands! And alas! who would envy any one the power? There is no situation in which a bishop can be placed, no branch of duty he can possibly exercise, so delicate, or which so exposes him to the jealousies not only of false but of true brethren, as this. The removal of preachers from district to district and from circuit to circuit, very nearly concerns them, and touches their tenderest feelings: and it requires no small portion of grace for a preacher to be *perfectly* contented with his appointment, when he is stationed in a circuit, where the societies are small, the rides long, and the fare coarse. Any one, therefore, may easily see, from the nature of man, that though the bishop has to deal with some of the best of men, he will sometimes raise himself opposers, who, by rather over-rating their own abilities, may judge him to be partial in respect to their appointments: and these circumstances would weigh down his mind to such a degree, as those who are not well acquainted with the difficulties which necessarily accompany public and important stations among mankind, can hardly conceive.

May we not add a few observations concerning the high expediency, if not necessity, of the present plan. How could an itinerant ministry be preserved through this extensive continent, if the yearly conferences were to station the preachers? They would, of course, be taken up with the *sole* consideration of the spiritual and temporal interests of *that part* of the connection, the direction of which was intrusted to them. The necessary consequence of this mode of proceeding would probably, in less than an age, be *the division of the body* and *the independence* of each yearly conference. The conferences would be more and more estranged from each other for want of a mutual exchange of

preachers: and *that grand spring, the union of the body at large*, by which, under divine grace, the work is more and more extended through this vast country, would be gradually weakened, till at last it might be entirely destroyed. The connection would no more be enabled to send missionaries to the western states and territories, in proportion to their rapid population. The grand circulation of ministers would be at an end, and a mortal stab given to the itinerant plan. The surplus of preachers in one conference could not be drawn out to supply the deficiencies of others, through declensions, locations, deaths, &c. and the revivals in one part of the continent could not be rendered beneficial to the others. *Our grand plan*, in all its parts, leads to an *itinerant* ministry. Our bishops are *travelling* bishops. All the different orders which compose our conferences are employed in the *travelling line*; and our local preachers are, *in some degree*, travelling preachers. Every thing is kept moving as far as possible; and we will be bold to say, that, next to the grace of God, there is nothing *like this* for keeping the whole body alive from the centre to the circumference, and for the continual extension of that circumference on every hand. And we verily believe, that if our episcopacy should, at any time, through tyrannical or immoral conduct, come under the severe censure of the general conference, the members thereof would see it highly for the glory of God to preserve the present form, and *only* to change the men.

2. Mr. Wesley, as the venerable founder (under God) of the whole Methodist society, governed without any responsibility whatever; and the universal respect and veneration of both the preachers and people for him, made them cheerfully submit to this: nor was there ever, perhaps, a mere human being who used so much power better, or with a purer eye to the Redeemer's glory, than that blessed man of God. But the American bishops are as responsible as any of the preachers. They are *perfectly subject* to the general conference. They are indeed conscious that the conference would neither degrade nor censure them, unless they deserved it. They have, on the one hand, the fullest confidence in their brethren; and, on the other, esteem the confidence which their brethren place in them, as the highest earthly honour they can receive.

But this is not all. They are subject to be tried by seven elders and two deacons, as prescribed above, for any immorality, or supposed immorality; and may be suspended by two-thirds of these, not only from all public offices, but even from being private members of the society, till the ensuing general conference. This mode subjects the bishops to a trial before a court of judicature, considerably inferior to that of a yearly conference. For there is not one of the yearly conferences which will not, proba-



bly, be attended by more presiding elders, elders, and deacons, than the conference which is authorized to try a bishop, the yearly conferences consisting of from thirty to sixty members. And we can, without scruple, assert, that there are no bishops of any other episcopal church upon earth, who are subject to so strict a trial as the bishops of the Methodist episcopal church in America. We trust, they will never need to be influenced by motives drawn from the fear of temporal or ecclesiastical punishments, in order to keep *from vice*: But if they do, may the rod which hangs over them have its due effect; or may they be expelled the church, as "salt which hath lost its flavour, and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men!"

3. Mr. Wesley had the entire management of all the conference-funds and the produce of the books. It is true, he expended all upon the work of God, and for charitable purposes; and rather than appropriate the least of it to his own use, refused, even when he was about seventy years of age, to travel in a carriage, till his friends in London and Bristol entered into a private subscription for the extraordinary expense. That great man of God might have heaped up thousands upon thousands, if he had been so inclined; and yet he died worth nothing but a little pocket money, the horses and the carriage in which he travelled, and the clothes he wore. But our American bishops have no probability of being rich. For not a cent of the public money is at their disposal: the conferences have the entire direction of the whole. Their salary is sixty-four dollars a year; and their travelling expenses are also defrayed. And with this salary they are to travel about six thousand miles a year, "in much patience," and sometimes "in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in labours, in watchings, in fastings," through "honour and dishonour, evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold," they "live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things;" and, we trust, they can each of them through grace say, in their small measure, with the great apostle, that "they are determined not to know any thing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified; yea, doubtless, and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord: for whom they have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that they may win Christ."

We have drawn this comparison between our venerable father and the American bishops, to shew to the world that they possess not, and, we may add, they aim not to possess, that power which he exercised and had a right to exercise, as the father of the connection: that, on the contrary, they are perfectly de-

pendent; that their power, their usefulness, themselves, are entirely at the mercy of the general conference, and, on the charge of immorality, at the mercy of two-thirds of the little conference of nine.

To these observations we may add, 1. That a branch of the episcopal office, which, in every episcopal church upon earth, since the first introduction of christianity, has been considered as essential to it, namely, *the power of ordination*, is singularly limited in our bishops. For they not only have no power to ordain *a person for the episcopal office* till he be first elected by the general conference, but they possess no authority to ordain *an elder or a travelling deacon*, till he be first elected by a *yearly conference*; or a local deacon, till he obtain a testimonial, signifying the approbation of the society to which he belongs, countersigned by the general stewards of the circuit, three elders, three deacons, and three travelling preachers. They are, therefore, not under the temptation of ordaining through interest, affection, or any other improper motive; because it is not in their power so to do. They have, indeed, authority to suspend the ordination of an elected person, because they are answerable *to God* for the abuse of their office, and the command of the apostle, "Lay hands suddenly on no man," is absolute: and, we trust, where conscience was really concerned, and they had *sufficient reason* to exercise their power of suspension, they would do it, even to the loss of the esteem of their brethren, which is more dear to them than life; yea, even to the loss of their usefulness in the church, which is more precious to them than all things here below. But every one must be immediately sensible, how cautious they will necessarily be, as men of wisdom, in the exercise of this suspending power. For unless they had such weighty reasons for the exercise of it, as would give some degree of satisfaction to the conference which had made the election, they would throw themselves into difficulties, out of which they would not be able to extricate themselves, but by the meekest and wisest conduct, and by reparation to the injured person.

2. The bishops are obliged to travel, till the general conference pronounces them worn-out or superannuated: for that certainly is the meaning of the answer to the 6th question of this section. What a restriction! Where is the like in any other episcopal church? It would be a disgrace to our episcopacy, to have bishops settled on their plantations here and there, evidencing to all the world, that instead of breathing the spirit of their office, they could, without remorse, *lay down their crown*, and bury the most important talents God has given to men! We would rather choose that our episcopacy should be blotted out from the face of the earth, than be spotted with such disgraceful conduct! All the episcopal churches in the world are conscious of the dig-

nity of the episcopal office. The greatest part of them endeavour to preserve this dignity by large salaries, splendid dresses, and other appendages of pomp and splendour. But if an episcopacy has neither the dignity which arises from these worldly trappings, nor that infinitely superior dignity which is the attendant of labour, of suffering and enduring hardship for the cause of Christ, and of a venerable old age, the concluding scene of a life, devoted to the service of God, it instantly becomes the disgrace of a church and the just ridicule of the world!

Some may think, that the mode of travelling, which the bishops are obliged to pursue, is attended with little difficulty, and much pleasure. Much pleasure they certainly do experience, because they know that they move in the will of God, and that the Lord is pleased to own their feeble labours. But if to travel through the heat and the cold, the rain and the snow, the swamps and the rivers, over the mountains and through the wilderness, lying for nights together on the bare ground and in log-houses, open to the wind on every side, fulfilling their appointments, as far as possible, whatever be the hinderance,—if these be little difficulties, then our bishops have but little to endure.

We have already quoted so many texts of Scripture in defence of episcopacy and the itinerant plan, that we need only refer our reader to the notes on the 1st and 3d sections: The whole tenor of St. Paul's epistles to Timothy and Titus clearly evidences, that *they* were invested, on the whole, with abundantly more power than our bishops: nor does it appear that *they* were responsible to any but God and the apostle. The texts quoted in the notes on the 3d section, in defence of the itinerant plan, we would particularly recommend to the reader's attention; as we must insist upon it, that *the general itinerancy* would not probably exist for any length of time on this extensive continent, if the bishops were not invested with that authority which they now possess. They alone travel through the whole connection, and, therefore, have such a view of the whole, as no yearly conference can possibly have.

One bishop, with the elders present, may consecrate a bishop who has been previously elected by the general conference. This is agreeable to the Scriptures. We read, 2 Tim. i. 6. "I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up *the gift* of God *which is in thee*, by the putting on of *my hands*:" here we have the imposition of the hands of the apostle. Again, we read, 1 Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not *the gift that is in thee*, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of *the presbytery*:" here we have the laying on of the hands of *the elders*. And by comparing both passages, it is evident that the imposition of hands was, both in respect to the apostle and the elders, *for the same gift*. Nor is the idea, that three bishops are necessary to

consecrate a bishop, grounded on any authority whatever, drawn from the Scriptures, or the practice of the apostolic age.

The authority given to, or rather declared to exist in, the general conference, that in case there shall be no bishop remaining in the church, they shall elect a bishop, and authorize the elders to consecrate him, will not admit of an objection, except on the supposition that the fable of an uninterrupted apostolic succession be allowed to be true. St. Jerome, who was as strong an advocate for episcopacy as perhaps any in the primitive church, informs us, that in the church of Alexandria (which was, in ancient times, one of the most respectable of the churches) the college of presbyters not only elected a bishop, on the decease of the former, but consecrated him by the imposition of their own hands *solely*, from the time of St. Mark, their first bishop, to the time of Dionysius, which was a space of about two hundred years: and the college of presbyters in ancient times answered to our general conference.

## SECTION V.

### *Of the Presiding Elders, and of their Duty.*

*Quest. 1.* **B**Y whom are the presiding elders to be chosen?

*Ans.* By the bishop.

*Quest. 2.* What are the duties of a presiding elder?

*Ans. 1.* To travel through his appointed district.

2. In the absence of a bishop, to take charge of all the elders, deacons, travelling and local preachers, and exhorters in his district.

3. To change, receive, or suspend preachers in his district during the intervals of the conferences, and in the absence of the bishop.

4. In the absence of a bishop, to preside in the conference.

5. To be present, as far as practicable, at all the quarterly meetings: and to call together at each quarterly meeting all the travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, to hear complaints, and to receive appeals.

6. To oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the societies in his district.

7. To take care that every part of our discipline be enforced in his district.

8. To attend the bishop when present in his district; and to give him when absent all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his district.

*Quest.* 3. By whom are the presiding elders to be stationed and changed?

*Ans.* By the bishop.

*Quest.* 4. How long may the bishop allow an elder to preside in the same district?

*Ans.* For any term not exceeding four years successively.

*Quest.* 5. How shall the presiding elders be supported?

*Ans.* If there be a surplus of the public money, in one or more circuits in his district, he shall receive such surplus, provided he do not receive more than his annual salary. In case of a deficiency in his salary, after such surplus is paid him, or if there be no surplus, he shall share with the preachers of his district, in proportion with what they have respectively received, so that he receive no more than the amount of his salary upon the whole.

## N O T E S.

We have already shewn by Scripture and argument, in our annotations on the twenty-second article of religion, that every church must necessarily be invested with the authority of ordaining rites and ceremonies in respect to all *unessential* matters, that is, respecting every thing which is not contrary to the Word of God. The same arguments will hold with exactly equal force, in respect to the powers which any church may think proper to invest in its public officers. The New Testament is almost entirely silent about all such things, as they depend so much on the circumstances of the churches, and the customs and manners of different nations.

However, there are some fundamental principles and general data\* afforded us in the New Testament (to which alone we can have recourse on this subject) on which we may build ac-

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\* *Points which are granted, and perfectly evident.*

cording to the circumstances in which we are placed. In the present instance, we have texts which indubitably prove that there were *presiding*, *superintending*, or *ruling* elders (the words bear the same meaning) in the church in the apostolic age, and that this office is fully warranted by the Word of God: Thus we read in Acts xx. 17—28. "From Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* of the church. And, when they were come to him, he said unto them,—Take heed—unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you *OVERSEERS*," &c. The word *overseers* in this place signifies, as it does every where, persons who had a considerable degree of superintendency over the work in which they were employed. Again, in 1 Tim. v. 17, we read, "Let the elders that *rule well* be counted worthy of double honour," &c. Every person who understands the original or even our own language, well knows that there is no difference at all in the sense between the words *presiding* and *ruling*, and that one might be substituted for the other. Once more, St. Peter, in his 1st Epistle, v. 1—3, observes "The *elders* which are among you, I exhort,—Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the *oversight* thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being *lords* over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Here we also see, that there were *elders*, who had the *oversight* or *superintendence* (for so the word signifies) of the *flock of God*: nor could St. Peter have cautioned these against *lording it* over God's heritage, if they had not had some authority in the church, which they might abuse. And we must desire our readers to remember, that we are not speaking here or in our observations concerning the episcopacy, of the powers which the apostles themselves exercised, but of those with which they invested others, or which the churches conferred upon their ministers respectively.

On the principles or data above-mentioned, all the episcopal churches in the world have, in some measure, formed their church-government. And we believe we can venture to assert, that there never has been an episcopal church of any great extent, which has not had *ruling* or *presiding* elders, either expressly *by name* as in the apostolic churches, or otherwise *in effect*. On this account it is, that all the modern episcopal churches have had their *presiding* or *ruling* elders under the names of grand vicars, archdeacons, rural deans, &c. The Moravians have *presiding* elders, who are invested with very considerable authority, though we believe they are simply termed elders. And we beg leave to repeat, that we are confident, we could, if need were, shew that all the episcopal churches ancient and modern, of any great extent, have had an order or set of ministers corresponding;

more or less, to our presiding or ruling elders, all of whom were, more or less, invested with the superintendence of other ministers.

Mr. Wesley informs us in his works, that the whole plan of Methodism was introduced, step by step, by the interference and openings of divine Providence. This was the case in the present instance. When Mr. Wesley drew up a plan of government for our church in America, he desired that no more elders should be ordained in the first instance than were absolutely necessary, and that the work on the continent should be divided between them, in respect to the duties of their office. The general conference accordingly elected twelve elders for the above purposes. Bishop Asbury and the district conferences afterwards found that this order of men was so necessary, that they agreed to enlarge the number, and give them *the name* by which they are at present called, and which is perfectly scriptural, though not *the word* used in our translation: and this proceeding afterwards received the approbation of Mr. Wesley.

In 1792 the general conference, equally conscious of the necessity of having such an office among us, not only confirmed every thing that bishop Asbury and the district conferences had done, but also drew up or agreed to the present section for the explanation of the nature and duties of the office. The conference clearly saw that the bishops wanted assistants; that it was impossible for one or two bishops so to superintend the vast work on this continent as to keep every thing in order in the intervals of the conference, without other official men to act under them and assist them: and as these would be only the agents of the bishops in every respect, the authority of appointing them, and of changing them, ought, from the nature of things, to be in the episcopacy. If the presiding or ruling elders were not men in whom the bishops could fully confide, or on the loss of confidence, could exchange for others, the utmost confusion would ensue. This also renders the authority invested in the bishops of fixing the extent of each district, highly expedient. They must be supposed to be the best judges of the abilities of the presiding elders whom they themselves choose: and it is a grand part of their duty, to make the districts and the talents of the presiding elders who act for them, suit and agree with each other, as far as possible: for it cannot be expected, that a sufficient number of them can at any time be found, of *equal talents*, and, therefore, the extent of their field of action must be proportioned to their gifts.

From all that has been advanced, and from those other ideas which will present themselves to the reader's mind on this sub-

ject, it will appear that the presiding elders must, of course, be appointed, directed, and changed by the episcopacy. And yet their power is so considerable, that it would by no means be sufficient for them to be responsible to the bishops *only* for their conduct in their office. They are as responsible in this respect, and in every other, to the *yearly* conference to which they belong, as any other preacher; and may be censured, suspended, or expelled from the connection, if the conference see it proper: nor have the bishops any authority to over-rule, suspend, or meliorate in any degree, the censures, suspensions, or expulsions of the conference.

Many and great are the advantages arising from this institution. 1. It is a great help and blessing to the quarterly meetings respectively, through the connection, to have a man at their head, who is experienced not only in the ways of God, but in men and manners, and in all things appertaining to the order of our church. Appeals may be brought before the quarterly meeting from the judgment of the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, who certainly would not be, in such cases, so proper to preside as the ruling elder. Nor would any local preacher, leader, or steward be a suitable president of the meeting, as his parent, his child, his brother, sister, or friend, might be more or less interested in the appeals which came before him: besides, his *local* situation would lead him almost unavoidably to *prejudge* the case, and, perhaps, to enter warmly into the interests of one or other of the parties, previously to the appeal. It is, therefore, indisputably evident, that the *ruling elder* is most likely to be impartial, and, consequently, the most proper person to *preside*.

2. Another advantage of this office arises from the necessity of changing preachers from circuit to circuit in the intervals of the yearly conferences. Many of the preachers are young in years and gifts; and this must always be the case, more or less, or a fresh supply of travelling preachers in proportion to the necessities of the work could not be procured. These young men, in general, are exceedingly zealous. Their grand *forte* is to awaken souls; and in this view they are highly necessary for the spreading of the gospel. But for some time their gifts cannot be expected to be *various*; and, therefore, half a year at a time or sometimes even a quarter, may be sufficient for them to labour in one circuit: to change them, therefore, from circuit to circuit, in the intervals of the yearly conferences, is highly necessary in many instances. Again, the preachers themselves, for family-reasons or on other accounts, may desire, and have reason to expect, a change. But who can make it in the absence of the bishops, unless there be a presiding elder appointed for the district? A recent instance proves the justice of this remark. A large district was lately without a presiding elder for a year.



Many of the preachers, sensible of the necessity of a change in the course of the year, met together, and settled every preliminary for the purpose. Accordingly, when the time fixed upon for the change arrived, several of them came to their new appointments according to agreement, but, behold, the others had changed their minds, and the former were obliged to return to their old circuits, feeling not a little disgrace on account of their treatment. And this would be continually the case, and all would be confusion, *if there were no persons invested with the powers of ruling elders, by whatever name they might be called*; as it would be impossible for the bishops to be present every where, and enter into the details of all the circuits.

3. Who is able properly to supply the vacancies in circuits on *the deaths* of preachers, or on *their withdrawing* from the travelling connection? Who can have a thorough knowledge of the state of the district, and of its resources for the filling up such vacancies, except the presiding elder who travels through the whole district? And shall circuits be often neglected for months together, and the flocks, during those times, be, more or less, without shepherds, and many of them, perhaps, perish for want of food, merely that one of the most scriptural and useful offices among us may be abolished? Shall we not rather support it, notwithstanding every thing which may be subtilly urged by our enemies under the cry of tyranny, which is the common cry of restless spirits even against the best governments, in order that they may throw every thing into confusion, and then ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm.

4. When a bishop visits a district, he ought to have one to accompany him, in whom he can fully confide; one, who can inform him of the whole work in a complete and comprehensive view; and, therefore, one who has travelled *through the whole*, and, by being present at all the quarterly meetings, can give all the information, concerning every circuit in particular, and the district in general, which the bishop can desire. Nor is the advantage small that the bishops, when at the greatest distance, may receive from the presiding elders a full account of their respective districts, and may thereby be continually in possession of a more comprehensive knowledge of the whole work, than they could possibly procure by any other means.

5. The only branch of the presiding elder's office, the importance and usefulness of which is not so obvious to some persons, but which is, at the same time, perhaps the most expedient of all, is *the suspending power*, for the preservation of *the purity* of our ministry, and that our people may never be burdened with preachers of *insufficient* gifts. Here we must not forget, that the presiding elder acts as agent to the bishops; and that the bishops are, the greatest part of their time, at a vast distance from him.

he must, therefore, exercise episcopal authority (ordination excepted) or he cannot act as their agent. All power may be abused. The only way which can be devised to prevent the abuse of it, if we will have a good and effective government, is to make the executive governors completely responsible, and their responsibility within the reach of the aggrieved. And, in the present instance, not only the general conference may expel the presiding elder—not only the episcopacy may suspend him from the exercise of his office—but the yearly conference may also impeach him, try him, and expel him: and such a threefold guard must be allowed, by every candid mind, to be as full a check to the abuse of his power, as, perhaps, human wisdom can devise.

But is it not strange, that any of *the people* should complain either of *this* or of the *episcopal* office? *These offices* in the church are peculiarly designed to meliorate the severity of christian discipline, as far as they respect *the people*. In them the people have a refuge, an asylum to which they may fly upon all occasions. To them they may appeal, and before them they may lay all their complaints and grievances. The persons who bear these offices are their fathers in the gospel, ever open of access, ever ready to relieve them under every oppression. And we believe we can venture to assert, that the people have never had even a *plausible* pretence to complain of the authority either of the bishops or the presiding elders.

6. We may add, as was just hinted above, that the bishops ought not to enter into *small details*. It is not their calling. To select the proper men who are to act as their agents—to preserve in order and in motion the wheels of the vast machine—to keep a constant and watchful eye upon the whole—and to *think deeply* for the general good—form their peculiar and important avocation. All of which shews the necessity of the office now under consideration.

The objection brought by some, that many of the most useful preachers are taken out of the circuits for this purpose, whose preaching-talents are thereby lost to the connection, will by no means bear examination. Even if this was the case, the vast advantage arising from a complete and effective superintendence of the work would, we believe, far over-balance this consideration. But the objection is destitute of weight. Their preaching abilities are, we believe, abundantly more useful. Though all the preachers of matured talents and experience cannot be employed as presiding elders, yet those who are employed as such, generally answer this character. They are qualified to build up believers on their most holy faith, and to remove scruples and answer cases of conscience, more than the younger preachers in general. In many circuits, some parts of the society might suffer much in respect to the divine life, for want of those gifts peculiarly neces-

fiary for *them*, were it not for this additional help ; whilst the junction of the talents of the presiding elder with those of the circuit-preachers will, in general, make the whole complete. And as the presiding elder is, or ought to be, always present at the quarterly meetings, he will have opportunities of delivering his whole mind to a very considerable part of the people : nor is there any reasonable ground to fear that he will ever wear out his talents, if we consider the extent of a district, and the obligation the episcopacy is under to remove him, at farthest, on the expiration of four years.

To these observations we may add, that the calling of district-conferences, on the immorality of travelling preachers, on their deaths, the necessity of removals, &c. would be attended with the most pernicious consequences to the circuits on this vast continent, where the districts are so large, and the absence of the preachers would be necessarily so long upon every such occasion. And we will venture to assert, that if any effective government ought to exist at all in the connection, during the intervals of the yearly and general conferences, there is *no alternative* between the authority of the bishops and their agents, the presiding elders, on the one hand, and the holding of district conferences on the other hand.

We will conclude our notes on this section with observing, that there is no ground to believe that the work of God has been injured, or the numbers of the society diminished, by the institution of this order, but just the contrary. In the year 1784, when the presiding eldership did, *in fact*, though not in *name*, commence, there were about 14000 in society on this continent ; and *now* the numbers amount to upwards of 56000 : so that the society is, at present, four times as large as it was twelve or thirteen years ago. We do not believe that the office now under consideration was *the principal cause* of this great revival, but the Spirit and grace of God, and the consequent zeal of the preachers in general. Yet we have no doubt, but the full organization of our body, and giving to the whole a complete and effective executive government, of which the presiding eldership makes a very capital branch, has, under God, been a grand means of preserving the peace and union of our connection and the purity of our ministry, and, therefore, *in its consequences*, has been a *chief instrument*, under the grace of God, of this great revival.

## SECTION VI.

*Of the Election and Ordination of Travelling Elders, and of their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is an *Elder* constituted?

*Ans.* By the election of a majority of the yearly conference, and by the laying on of the hands of a bishop, and of the elders that are present.

*Quest.* 2. What is the duty of a travelling elder?

*Ans.* 1. To administer baptism and the Lord's supper, and to perform the office of matrimony, and all parts of divine worship.

2. To do all the duties of a travelling preacher.

N. B. No elder that ceases to travel, without the consent of the yearly conference, certified under the hand of the president of the conference, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office amongst us.

## NOTES.

Acts xiv. 23. When they [Paul and Barnabas] had *ordained* them *elders* in every church,—they commended them to the Lord. Titus i. 5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest—*ordain elders* in every city. See also Acts xv. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23. xvi. 4. 1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19. Jam. v. 14.

We need not enlarge upon the necessity of an office, which every organized christian church in the world, in all ages, has adopted. We would only remark, that the restriction respecting the elders' withdrawing themselves from the travelling line, without the consent of the yearly conference, shews the confirmed regard our church has for *the itinerant plan*, and its determination to support it by every method in its power, consistent with justice and truth. And no elder has a right to complain, as he cannot but be previously acquainted with the conditions on which he accepts of ordination.

## SECTION VII.

*Of the Election and Ordination of Travelling Deacons, and of their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is a *travelling* deacon constituted?  
*Ans.* By the election of the majority of the yearly conference, and the laying on of the hands of a bishop.

*Quest.* 2. What is the duty of a *travelling deacon*?

*Ans.* 1. To baptize, and perform the office of matrimony, in the absence of the elder.

2. To assist the elder in administering the Lord's supper.

3. To do all the duties of a travelling preacher.

*Quest.* 3. What shall be the time of probation of a travelling deacon for the office of an elder.

*Ans.* Every travelling deacon shall exercise that office for two years, before he be eligible to the office of an elder; except in the case of missions, when the yearly conferences shall have authority to elect for the elders office sooner, if they judge it expedient.

N. B. No deacon who ceases to travel without the consent of the yearly conference, certified under the hand of the president of the conference, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office.

## NOTES.

Acts vi. 1—6. " In those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then *the twelve* called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that *we* should leave the word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But *we* will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the

**Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas** a profelyte of Antioch, whom they set before the Apostles: and, when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them."

We have in the passage above quoted; an account of the institution of the order of deacons; from which it appears, 1. That the primary design of the order was, that the widows, the aged, the infirm, &c. should be sufficiently provided for. For we are not to suppose, that *the widows only in this respect* were the objects of their care, but all the infirm, and all whose temporal situation required extraordinary attention.

2. Nor can we with any propriety imagine, that the circle of action of men *like these*, who were FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST AND WISDOM; was confined to such menial offices. They were men, we doubt not, chosen out of the preachers of the gospel, who used *the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the wisdom they had received from above*, not so much for ministering to the temporal wants of the widows, &c. as to the spiritual wants of immortal souls, for which principally such invaluable blessings were bestowed upon them. Accordingly we are informed, Acts vi. 8. that "Stephen [the first of the deacons] *full of faith and power*, did great wonders and miracles among the people." He had also the high honour of being the first christian martyr, by being stoned to death "for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God."\* Again, we read of Philip, another of those deacons, who was commanded by an angel of the Lord to "go toward the south," to preach the gospel to "an eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship;" and after the conversion and baptism of the eunuch, "the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip" (adds the word of God) "was found at Azotus: and, passing through, *he preached in all the cities*, till he came to Cesarea." See Acts viii. 26—40. It must be evident to every candid reader of the above-quoted passages, that these two deacons were preachers of the gospel. And we must beg leave to repeat, *in respect to the whole of them*, that the description which the word of God gives of them, clearly raises them above the private members in general of a christian society, in respect to *gifts, and wisdom, and power*.

3. The directions which the great apostle gives to Timothy in respect to the *deacons*, are so weighty and solemn, that it is evident the apostle considered *those men* as of far greater importance than to be limited in their public offices *merely* to the work of ser-

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\* Rev. xx. 4.

ving tables, or attending on the poor and infirm: 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. “Likewise must the *deacons* be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre: holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. *And let these also first be proved; then* let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers; sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” The last words are certainly descriptive of an office of considerable importance in the church of God.

4. All we have said in respect to this office agrees with the accounts given us by the fathers of the church, in the purest ages of christianity. From their writings we are also informed, that the deacons were employed to assist the elder or presbyter in the administration of the Lord’s supper; and also to carry a part of the consecrated elements to the sick, who were not able to attend at the place of public worship. And as we find from the first quoted text that the deacons were set apart for their office by the imposition of hands, but not by the imposition of the hands of the elders, as in other cases; so we endeavour to come as near to the scripture-mode as we can, by confining the ceremony of the imposition of hands to the episcopacy only, in the present instance, without daring to compare ourselves, as some of our enemies would most maliciously assert, to the holy apostles; but simply, and in the fear of God, coming up to the written word as nearly as in our power.

5. This office serves as an excellent probation for that of an elder. No preacher can be eligible to the office of an elder, till he has exercised the office of a deacon for two years, except in the case of missions. For we would wish to shew the utmost attention to the order of elders, and to have the fullest proof of the abilities, grace, and usefulness of those, who shall be, from time to time, proposed for so important an office as that of a presbyter in the church of God. And we judge, that the man who has proved himself a worthy member of our society, and an useful class-leader, exhorter, and local preacher, who has been approved of for two years as a travelling preacher on trial, and has faithfully served in the office of a travelling deacon for at least two years more—has offered such proofs of fidelity and piety, as must satisfy every reasonable mind. But as this continent is exceedingly large, and will continually open to our conferences new missions for the spread of the gospel (perhaps for ages to come) we have, in the case of missions given a discretionary power to the yearly conferences. We have thus been able, through the grace and providence of God, to constitute such a regular gra-

dation in our ministry, as, we trust, will contribute highly to its purity, to the dignity of the ministerial office, and to the advantage of our people.

6. We have here also made the same restriction for the preservation of our important itinerant plan, in respect to the deacons' withdrawing themselves from the general work, without the consent of the yearly conference, which was made before in the case of the elders, and which has been spoken to in the notes on the former section.

## S E C T I O N VIII.

### *Of the Method of receiving Preachers, and of their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is a preacher to be received ?

*Ans.* 1. By the yearly conference.  
2. In the interval of the conference, by the bishop, or presiding elder of the district, until the sitting of the conference.

3. When his name is not printed in the minutes, he must receive a written licence from the bishop or presiding elder.

*Quest.* 2. What is the duty of a preacher ?

*Ans.* 1. To preach.

2. To meet the societies, classes, and bands.

3. To visit the sick.

4. To preach in the morning, where he can get hearers.

*N. B.* We are fully determined never to drop morning preaching, and to preach at five o'clock in the summer, and six in the winter, wherever it is practicable.

*Quest.* 3. What are the directions given to a preacher ?

*Ans.* 1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed ; never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time ; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be, *holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.



3. Converſe ſparingly and cautiously with women.  
1 Timothy, v. 2.

4. Take no ſtep towards marriage without firſt conſulting with your brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one without good evidence; unleſs you ſee it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the beſt conſtruction on every thing. You know the judge is always ſuppoſed to be on the priſoner's ſide.

6. Speak evil of no one; elſe your word eſpecially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breaſt, till you come to the perſon concerned.

7. Tell every one under your care, what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that plainly, as ſoon as may be: elſe it will feſter in your heart. Make all haſte to caſt the fire out of your boſom.

8. Avoid all affectation. A preacher of the goſpel is the ſervant of all.

9. Be aſhamed of nothing but ſin.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath but conſcience' ſake.

11. You have nothing to do but to ſave ſouls. Therefore ſpend and be ſpent in this work. And go always not only to thoſe that want, but to thoſe that want you moſt.

Obſerve! It is not your buſineſs only to preach ſo many times, and to take care of this or that ſociety: But to ſave as many ſouls as you can; to bring as many ſinners as you poſſibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holineſs, without which they cannot ſee the Lord. And remember! A Methodiſt preacher is to mind every point great and ſmall, in the Methodiſt diſcipline! Therefore you will need to exerciſe all the ſenſe and grace you have.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a ſon in the goſpel. As ſuch it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which we di-

rect : in preaching and visiting from house to house : in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

*Quest. 4.* What method do we use in receiving a preacher at the conference?

*Ans.* After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the conference, the following questions (with any others which may be thought necessary) viz. Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work? Do you know the rules of the society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you constantly attend the sacrament? Have you read the form of discipline? Are you willing to conform to it? Have you considered the rules of a preacher; especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you endeavour not to speak too long or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example? Are you in debt?

We may then, if he gives us satisfaction, receive him as a probationer, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus : To A. B. "*You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer.*" Let him then carefully read and weigh what is contained therein; that if he has any doubt, it may be removed. Observe! Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every one that has the charge of a circuit, explain this to those who are on

trial, as well as to those who are in future to be proposed for trial.

But no one shall be received, unless he first procure a recommendation from the quarterly meeting of his circuit.

After two years' probation, being approved by the yearly conference, and examined by the president of the conference, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the form of discipline inscribed thus : *As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer.*

N. B. If any preacher absent himself from his circuit without the leave of the presiding elder, the presiding elder shall, as far as possible, fill his place with another preacher, who shall be paid for his labours out of the salary of the absent preacher in proportion to the usual allowance.

## N O T E S.

If we duly consider the articles containing the duties of a preacher, and the manner in which he must fill up those duties, from the nature and situation of the work in which he is engaged, we may venture to address him in the words of the great apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." And we may add, with the wise man, Ecclesi. xi. 6. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good." To preach almost every day, and to meet societies or classes several times in the week, and to visit the sick, not only in the towns, but as far as practicable on the plantations, is a work which requires no small degree of diligence and zeal: and no person is fit to be a travelling preacher, who cannot fill up these duties incessantly all the year round, except occasional indispositions incapacitate him for a season; or some reasonable and urgent necessity call him away for a little time.

Let us now take a view of the twelve rules for the direction of a preacher.

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1. Let every moment be employed to the glory of God! This is the substance of the first rule. And how agreeable is this to the written Word: Ecclef. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do it with thy might*: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." Eph. v. 15, 16. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *redeeming the time*, because the days are evil." 1 Tim. iv. 15. "Meditate upon these things, *give thyself wholly to them*; that thy profiting may appear to all." At the same time that we should endeavour to lie fully open, in all our sermons, to the influences of the Holy Spirit of God, "we should not offer to the Lord our God of that which doth cost us nothing," 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. Time is one of the most precious talents man possesses: O that those words of the poet may be engraven on every preacher's heart,

—————"Pay no

"Moment but for the purchase of its worth:

"And what's its worth? Ask death-beds, they can tell!"

2. Let all your deportment be grave, according to those commands of the apostle, Eph. v. 4. "[Let] neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient [be once named among you:] but rather giving of thanks." Col. iv. 5, 6. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, *redeeming the time*. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." 1 Tim. iv. 12. "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." A minister of the gospel should preach, not only by his sermons, but by his actions, his common conversation: his whole example, yea, even by his looks. He should be every where a flame of fire. Wherever he is, the eyes of all are upon him. He cannot be neutral, but in every place will do either good or evil.

3. Preserve chastity even in the most delicate sense of the word. Remember those words of our Lord, Matt. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart:" and, therefore, see that you "make a covenant with your eyes," Job xxxi. 1.—that you "entreat the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity," 1 Tim. v. 2. — and that you "flee youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a *pure heart*," 2 Tim. ii. 22.

4. What St. Paul says of the *wives* of the deacons, belongs as much to the wives of preachers. "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers; sober, faithful in all things," 1 Tim. iii.

57. Preachers certainly, therefore, should not trust in their own judgments, *merely*, in so weighty an affair.

5. Take care that your private sentiments of your brethren be not biased, or your esteem of them diminished, except by convincing proof. "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," Matt. vii. 1, 2. "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins," 1 Pet. iv. 8. Charity "*covereth* all things" (for so should the original word be rendered) "believeth all things, hopeth all things," 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

6. Be exceedingly tender of the characters of others: for to rob another of his character, by rash judgment, is to do him an irreparable injury. Let those words of Scripture be ever kept in view, as of infinite importance to all, but especially to a minister of the gospel, 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. "Shun profane and vain babblings; for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doeth a canker." The influence of a travelling preacher is very extensive: and for him to use that influence for the ruin of characters would be terrible indeed! Jam. i. 19, 20. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." iv. 11, 12. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save, and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" Tit. iii. 1, 2. "*Put them in mind*—to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing *all meekness* unto *all men*:" You are not only always thus to bridle your own tongue, but frequently to *put others in mind* of this important duty.

7. At the same time, it is your bounden duty to reprove sin, wherever you meet with it: So says the word of God: Lev. xix. 17. "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him." Eph. v. 11. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Ver. 13. "All things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light." To reprove the open, presumptuous sinner, or to tell your brother of his faults in private, or even in public, if the sin be gross, and the honour of God and his sacred cause demand it, by no means clashes with the two preceding rules. It must also be remembered, that these three last rules do not relate to the conduct of those who have the oversight of circuits, when they act as *judges*: *their duties*, in that respect, shall be considered in due place.

8. Labour after that true greatness of soul, that genuine humility, of which our adorable Redeemer sets us so bright an example. "Better it is to be of an humble spirit," says the wise man, "than to divide the spoil with the proud," Prov. xvi. 19. "I say, through the grace given unto me," observes the great apostle, "to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith," Rom. xii. 3. And again, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves, your servants, for Jesus' sake," 2 Cor. iv. 5.

9. What a pattern have we before us in our Lord, for all christians, but especially for those whose one business is to save souls? John xiii. 3—17. "Jesus——riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth water into a bason and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.—So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Pride is the very spirit of the devil: he is full of pride. All other graces, without humility, are like a fine powder carried in the wind without a cover, soon blown away and gone. The streams of grace flow down, and sink into the vallies of humility, and there *only* fructify, whilst the hills of pride are dry and barren. But at the same time, the true minister of Christ, like his Master, can, in the way of duty, when necessary, "set his face like a flint,"\* and go through the fire and through the water. "The wicked flee, when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion," Prov. xxviii. 1.

10. *Punctuality* is of vast importance in every circumstance of life. Without it, no confidence can exist: and the want of it is productive of innumerable evils to society. But how much stronger are these observations, when applied to our situation? The itinerant plan, which we so much and so justly venerate, would be the most pernicious in the world, without *punctuality*. It would be almost sufficient to make mankind hate religion. The man who will disappoint a congregation through any world-

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\* *Isaiah* l. 7.

ly motive, is highly criminal, and answerable for all the evil which his negligence has caused—answerable for all the souls which, through disgust, do afterwards despise or neglect the ordinances of God. When an appointment is fixed, and cannot be revoked in time, it should be considered as an engagement made to God. “Lord,” says the Psalmist, “who shall abide in thy tabernacle, and who shall dwell in thy holy hill?——He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.” See Psalm xv. and the word of a preacher of the gospel, indeed of every christian, should be the same as his oath, or he is not even an honest man. Alas! the good which the best of us do, is but little, and, therefore, should not suffer any subtraction. *But when the itinerant preacher frequently proves himself destitute of punctuality, his life and labours become more hurtful than profitable.* He not only prevents a faithful man from filling up the office which he himself abuses, but gives continual offence, and imperceptibly drives numbers from the ordinances of God, and thereby out of the way of salvation. “Give,” therefore, “none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God. Even as I,” adds the apostle, “please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved,” 1 Cor. x. 32, 33. What a reason, “*that they may be saved!*” A reason, which should influence the heart of a preacher of the gospel more than the strongest temptations of sense or temporal interest! Approve yourselves, therefore, “as the ministers of God, giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed,” 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4.

II. The salvation of souls should be your only aim. The zeal of the Lord’s house should eat you up. O that we could but feel a little of what Jesus felt *for immortal souls*, when he offered up himself on Calvary! In speculation we acknowledge *their* inestimable value: but O for the practice! O for a little of the zeal of the great apostle, when he was going, bound in the spirit, to Jerusalem, and could say to the elders of the church of Ephesus, “None of these things *move* me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the *ministry* which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God!” Acts xx. 24. This spirit will give us true humility, and make us prefer the meanest houses of the poor, when we can benefit immortal souls, to the most pompous buildings and most elegant entertainments, when we have *no access* to the souls of men. “To the weak,” says St. Paul, “became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might *by all means* save some,” 1 Cor. ix. 22. O! let us think it an honour to consume our lives in so glorious a

**work!** May we be able to say to our people from the ground of our hearts, with the apostle, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though," adds the apostle, "the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved," 2 Cor. xii. 15. Even in that trying situation, when despised or disapproved of by many, yet still let us go on, speaking and acting for God, and leaving all consequences to him. Let us not be discouraged: let God do *his* work of blessing, and let us do *our* work of sowing the seed, and of planting and watering, in season and out of season. Then we shall certainly have seals to our ministry, though, perhaps, the Lord may hide many of them, at present, from our eyes, lest we should be exalted above measure: and in due time, if we faint not,—if we lay not down *our* crown, we "shall shine as the stars for ever and ever, having [through grace] turned many to righteousness," Dan. xii. 3.

12. The command given by the apostle, Heb. xiii. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves," is as binding on ministers as on the people. Among us there is no exception. Our bishops are bound to obey and submit to the general conference; and the preachers are bound to obey and submit to the general conference, and also to the yearly conferences, in every thing except the stationing of them for their respective districts and circuits; and in this respect they are bound to obey and submit to the episcopacy. This is the order of our church: and as the New Testament is silent as to the constitutions of states, so is it, in a great measure, in respect to the constitutions of churches. It only requires obedience or submission to the powers that are, without which no order could possibly exist. This does not, in any degree, prevent the due reformation of the constitutions of churches, any more than of those of states. We may add to these considerations the command of St. Peter, 1st Ep. v. 5. "Ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder."

The due examination of candidates for the ministry is of the utmost importance. The questions proposed for this purpose, in the present section, may be drawn out and enlarged upon by the bishops, as they judge necessary; and, if duly considered will be found to contain in them the whole of christian and ministerial experience and practice. In respect to doctrines, experience, and practice, the preachers will have passed already through various examinations, before they are received into the travelling connection. Let us take a view of the whole, remembering that our societies form our grand nurseries or universities for ministers of the gospel.

1. On application for admission into the society, they must be duly recommended to the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, by one in whom he can place sufficient confidence, or must have met three or four times in a class, and must be truly awak-



lenced to a sense of their fallen condition. Then the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, gives them notes of admission, and they remain on trial for six months. 2. When the six months are expired, they receive tickets, if recommended by their leader, and become full members of the society. And to prevent any future complaint on the ground of ignorance, the rules of the society must be read to them the first time they meet in class. 3. Out of these are chosen, from time to time, *the leaders of classes*, who should not only be deeply experienced in divine things, but have a measure of the gift of preaching, so as to feed the flock of Christ under their care, in due season. 4. Out of these, when they discover in public prayer-meetings an extraordinary gift of prayer and some gift for exhortation, are chosen *the exhorters*. 5. Out of the exhorters, who are employed in the places of least consequence, or to fill up the place of a preacher, in cases of necessity, are chosen *the local preachers*. These are first to receive a licence signed by the presiding elder, and by the quarterly meeting,\* which is composed of the local preachers, stewards, and leaders of the circuit. Without the consent of the presiding elder, and of the majority of this meeting, which is the most proper and respectable representation of the circuit that perhaps can possibly be devised, no one can be admitted as a local preacher. And the licence above-mentioned must be annually renewed, till the local preacher be admitted into the deacon's office. 6. Out of the local preachers are chosen *the travelling preachers*, of whom those in full connection form the members of our conferences. These must be on trial for two years before they can be received into full connection with the conference, their characters being examined at each conference (whether they be present or absent) in respect to morals, grace, gifts, and fruit. Nor can they be received upon trial as *travelling preachers*, till they have obtained a recommendation from the quarterly meetings of their respective circuits. The bishops indeed, and the presiding elders, have authority to call them to travel, in the intervals of the conferences, when they have received the above recommendation, otherwise the circuits would be frequently destitute of preachers. But their call to travel, must afterwards be confirmed by the yearly conference.

From all that has been observed, it must be clear to every candid reader, that it is not the yearly conference *only*, or the bishops or presiding elders *only*, in the intervals of the conferences, who choose the local or travelling preachers. On the contrary, *they* have no authority to choose at all, till the people, through their leaders, stewards, &c. recommend. And those who will

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\* See the 21st section of this chapter.

not be satisfied with this whole process of probation, considered in all its parts, must be rigid indeed. But we bless God for the whole of this economy, and do attribute to it, under his grace and providence, the purity of our ministry. When we consider the importance of *the gospel ministry*, this severe process is by no means excessive. "Now then," says St. Paul, "*we are ambassadors for Christ*, as though God did beseech you by us," 2 Cor. v. 20. And again, "Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or *our brethren* be inquired of, *they are the messengers of the churches*, and the **GLORY of CHRIST**," viii. 23. "Try the spirits," says St. John, "whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world," 1 John iv. 1.

## S E C T I O N IX.

### *Of the Salaries of the Ministers and Preachers.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT is the annual salary of the bishops, elders, deacons, and preachers?

*Ans.* Sixty-four dollars, and their travelling expences.

*Quest. 2.* What shall be annually allowed the wives of the married preachers?

*Ans.* The wife of every travelling preacher shall have the same claim to a yearly salary of sixty-four dollars, as a travelling preacher.

*Quest. 3.* What plan shall we pursue in appropriating the money received by our travelling ministers for marriage-fees?

*Ans.* In all the circuits where the preachers do not receive their full quarterage, let all such money be given into the hands of the stewards, and be equally divided between the travelling preachers of the circuit. In all other cases the money shall be disposed of at the discretion of the yearly conference.

N. B. No minister or preacher whatsoever shall receive any money for deficiencies, or on any other account, out of any of our funds or collections, without first giving an exact account of all the money, clothes, and other presents of every kind, which he has received the preceding year.

## N O T E S.

The duty which lies upon the people to support their ministers, is established by the following scriptures: viz. 1 Cor. ix. 7, 11, 13, 14. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?—If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?—Do ye not know, that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things."

Those who read this section attentively, will see the impossibility of our ministers becoming rich by the gospel, except in grace. And here there is no difference between bishops, elders, deacons, or preachers, except in their travelling expences, and consequently in the greater labours of one than the other. The gifts they have to impart, are not silver and gold, but, through the Divine blessing on their labours, and the operations of the Holy Spirit accompanying their word, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance." And we may add, that the impossibility of our enriching ourselves by *our ministry*, is another great preservation of *its* purity. The lovers of this world will not long continue travelling preachers. Indeed, we may add, that a great many of the preachers do not receive the whole of their annual pittance, generally, we believe, through the poverty, but sometimes perhaps through the inattention of our friends.

The clause concerning the allowance for a preacher's wife, may need some explanation. The wife is to have *the same claim* in respect to salary as the travelling preacher: so that if there be a married and a single preacher in the same circuit, and the money for the support of the ministry be not sufficient to make up all the salaries, the whole is to be divided into three parts, one part of which belongs to the wife.

## S E C T I O N X.

*Of the Duties of those who have the Charge of Circuits.*

Quest. 1. **W**HAT are the duties of the elder, deacon, or preacher, who has the special charge of a circuit?

*Ans.* 1. To see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing.

2. To renew the tickets quarterly, and regulate the bands.

3. To meet the stewards and leaders, as often as possible.

4. To appoint all the stewards and leaders, and change them when he sees it necessary.

5. To receive, try, and expel members according to the form of discipline.

6. To hold watch-nights and love-feasts.

7. To hold quarterly meetings in the absence of the presiding elder.

8. To take care that every society be duly supplied with books.

9. To take an exact account of the numbers in society, and bring it to the conference.

10. To send an account of his circuit every quarter to his presiding elder.

11. To meet the men and women apart in the large societies once a quarter, wherever it is practicable.

12. To overlook the accounts of all the stewards.

13. To appoint a person to receive the quarterly collection in the *classes*.

14. To see that *public* collections be made quarterly, if need be.

15. To raise a yearly subscription in those circuits that can bear it, for building churches, and paying the debts of those which have been already erected.

16. To choose a committee of lay-members to make a just application of the money, where it is most wanted.

*Quest.* 2. What other directions shall we give him?

*Ans.* Several:

1. To take a regular catalogue of the societies in towns and cities, as they live in streets.

2. To leave his successor a particular account of the state of the circuit.

3. To see that every band-leader have the rules of the bands.

4. To enforce vigorously, but calmly, all the rules of the society.

5. As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, to put them into a band.

6. To suffer no love-feast to last above an hour and a half.

7. To warn all, from time to time, that none are to remove from one circuit to another, without a note of recommendation from a preacher of the circuit in these words: "*A. B. the bearer has been an acceptable member of our society in C.*" and to inform them, that, without such a certificate, they will not be received into other societies.

8. To recommend every where decency and cleanliness.

9. To read the rules of the society, with the aid of the other preachers, once a year in every congregation, and once a quarter in every society.

10. On any dispute between two or more of the members of our society, concerning the payment of debts or otherwise, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the preacher who has the charge of the circuit, shall inquire into the circumstances of the case; and, having consulted the stewards and leaders, shall, if agreeable to their advice, recommend to the contending parties a reference consisting of one arbiter chosen by the plaintiff, and another chosen by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen shall nominate a third; the three arbiters being members of our society.

But if one of the parties be dissatisfied with the judgment given, such party may apply to the ensuing quarterly meeting of the circuit, for allowance to have a *second* arbitration appointed; and if the quarterly meeting see sufficient reason, they shall grant a *second* arbitration; in which case, each party shall choose two arbiters, and the four arbiters shall choose a fifth, the judgment of the majorities of whom shall be final; and any party refusing to abide by such judgment, shall be excluded the society.

And if any member of our society shall refuse in cases of debt or other disputes, to refer the matter to arbitration, when recommended by him who has the charge of the circuit, with the approbation of the stewards and leaders; or shall enter into a law-suit with another member before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled.

The preachers who have the oversight of circuits are required to execute all our rules fully and strenuously against all frauds, and particularly against dishonest insolvencies; suffering none to remain in our society, on any account, who are found guilty of any fraud.

11. The preacher who has the charge of a circuit, shall appoint prayer-meetings wherever he can, in his circuit.

12. He shall take care that a fast be held in every society in his circuit, on the Friday preceding every quarterly meeting; and that a memorandum of it be written on all the class-papers.

13. He shall also take care, that no unordained local preacher or exhorter in his circuit shall officiate in public, without first obtaining a licence from the presiding elder or himself. Let every unordained local preacher and exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: and let him who has the charge of the circuit, insist upon it.

## N O T E S .

When we consider the duties of the office described in this section, we shall feel no difficulty in allowing, that it is an office of no small importance.

1. The person who holds it, is to watch over the other travelling preachers in his circuit, not with the eye of a severe judge, but with that of a tender elder brother. He should indeed be faithful to his colleagues, and tell them all their faults: but he has no power to correct them. He is to bear an equal share with them in the toils of a travelling preacher, besides having upon him the care of all the churches in his circuit. But if his colleagues will not observe his reasonable directions, or behave grossly amiss, he must inform his presiding elder, whose duty it is, as soon as possible, to judge of and rectify every thing. He is also to use his influence with the people, that his fellow-labourers may

stand in need of nothing for the simple convenience or at least necessities of this transitory life. They want but little, and that little they ought to have. This also implies, that if his colleague be married, he should take care that neither he nor his family stand in need of any of the necessities of life. For his performance of this duty, as well as all the rest, he is bounden to God, as well as to the church of which he is a member. "Jesus called them [the twelve] unto him, and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be *your minister*; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the *Son of Man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," Matt. xx. 25—28.

2. He is to deliver tickets quarterly to each member of the society, with a portion of the word of God printed on them. This is of no small moment for the preservation of our discipline and the purity of our church. To admit frequently unawakened persons to our society-meetings and love-feasts, would be to throw a damp on those profitable assemblies, and cramp, if not entirely destroy *that liberty of speech*, which is always made a peculiar blessing to earnest believers and sincere seekers of salvation. Besides, this regulation affords the preacher who holds the office now under consideration, an opportunity of speaking closely to every person under his care on the state of their souls. "I know thy works," says our Lord, "and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:—and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted," Rev. ii. 2, 3. The other duty of regulating the bands is also of great consequence, as will appear when we come to enlarge on the 3d section of the 2d chapter.

3. He is to watch over the stewards and leaders of his circuit. He should meet them weekly, when in the towns, and as often as may be in the country. He is to recommend to the stewards the poor of their societies, to lay before them, if necessary, the wants of his colleagues, and to stir them up to fidelity and activity, in their office: but above all, he is to exhort the leaders, to instruct them in the best mode of addressing their classes, and to set before them the inestimable value of the precious souls respectively intrusted to their care. His whole soul should say, "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" Numb. xi. 29.

4. As he is the least likely to be influenced by the various circumstances arising from neighbourhood, long acquaintance, affection, consanguinity, or any other motives distinct from, old-

cial talents, he is to appoint the stewards. And as he is, or should be, the best judge of the gifts and experience of the members of society, he also is to select the men, from time to time, who are to fill up the weighty office of leader. And again, as he is the only person in the circuit, who is responsible to the yearly conference for the decline of the work of God in his circuit, and the only one the conference *can make* responsible, he has the authority invested in him of changing leaders, when they have lost the life of God, or are incapacitated for or negligent of their duty. But if he ever use this power in a capricious or tyrannical manner, the people may lay their grievances before the bishops or presiding elders, who have authority to suspend him for ill conduct; or, before the yearly conference, which may proceed even to his expulsion, if he grossly offend against that wisdom which is from above, "and which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, *without partiality, and without hypocrisy,*" Jam. iii. 17.

5. He is also to receive members upon trial, and into society, according to the form of discipline. If this authority were invested in the society, or any part of it, the great work of revival would soon be at an end. A very remarkable proof of this was given several years ago, by a society in Europe. Many of the leading members of that society, were exceedingly importunate to have the whole government of their society invested in a meeting composed of the principal preacher, and a number of *lay elders* and *lay deacons*, as they termed them. At last, the preacher who had the oversight of the circuit, was prevailed upon, through their incessant importunity, to comply with their request. He accordingly nominated all the *leaders* and *stewards*, as lay elders and lay deacons with the desired powers. But alas! What was the consequence? The great revival which was then in that society and congregation, was soon extinguished. Poor sinners, newly awakened, were flocking into the church of God as doves to their windows. But now, the wisdom and prudence of *the new court* kept them at a distance, till they had given full proof of their repentance: "if their convictions be sincere," said they, "they will not withdraw themselves from the preaching of the word on account of our caution; they themselves will see the propriety of our conduct." Thus, whilst the fervent preacher was one hour declaring the willingness of Christ immediately to receive the returning sinners, the wisdom of the lay elders and lay deacons would the next hour reject them even from being received upon trial, unless they had been before *painted sepulchres, inwardly full of dead men's bones and rottenness.* The preacher who had the charge of the circuit nearly broke his heart, to see the precious souls which God had given him, kept at a distance from him, and thrown back again upon the wide world by *the prudent lay*



*Elders and deacons.* However, at his earnest entreaty, he was removed into another circuit by the conference, under whose controul he acted, to enjoy the blessings of the *Methodist economy*. The revival of the work of God was soon extinguished; and the society, from being one of the most lively, became one of the most languid in Europe.

Glory be to God, *all* our societies throughout the world, now amounting to upwards of 160,000 have been raised, under grace, *by our ministers and preachers.* *They, and they only,* are their spiritual fathers under God; and none others can feel for them as *they* do. It is true, that on great revivals, the spiritually halt, and blind; and lame, will press in crowds into the church of God; and they are welcome to all that we can do for their invaluable souls, till they prove unfaithful to convincing or converting grace. And we will not throw back their souls on the wicked world, whilst groaning under the burden of sin, because many on the trial quench their convictions, or perhaps were hypocritical from the beginning. We would sooner go again into the highways and hedges, and form new societies as at first, than we would give up a privilege so essential to the ministerial office and to the revival of the work of God.

“The master of the house [God]—said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and *bring in hither* the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.” He obeys his God, without asking permission of any society, whether he should obey him or not. “And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel them to come in, that my house may be filled,*” Luke xiv. 21—23. The servant answers not to his God, I will comply with thy command as far as my society, or my leaders and stewards will permit me. Again, the Lord says to Ezekiel, ch. xxxiv. 1—10, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Wo be to the shepherds of Israel—the diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, *neither have ye brought again, that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.* —And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.—Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock—Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I WILL REQUIRE MY

FLOCK AT THEIR HAND, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock," &c. Now, what pastors, called and owned of God, would take upon themselves this awful responsibility, if others could refuse to their spiritual children the grand external privilege of the gospel, or admit among them the most improper persons to mix with and corrupt them. Truly, whatever the pastors of other churches may do, we trust that ours will never put themselves under so dreadful a bondage. It is in vain to say, that others may be as tender and cautious as *the pastors*: for *the pastors* are the persons responsible to God, and, therefore, should by no means be thus fettered in their pastoral care. And those who are desirous to wrest out of the hands of ministers this important part of their duty, should rather go out themselves to the highways and hedges, and preach the everlasting gospel, or be contented with their present providential situation.

Besides, the command of our Lord, Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go ye, —and teach all nations, *baptizing* them," &c. is addressed to *pastors only*, —to his disciples, and through them to all his *ministering* servants to the end of the world. But if ministers are to be the judges of the proper subjects of *baptism*, which is the grand initiatory ordinance into the visible church, how much more should they have a right to determine, whom they will take under *their own* care, or whom God has given them out of the world by the preaching of his word. For ministers to spend their strength, their tears, their prayers, their lives for the salvation of souls, and to have both themselves and *THEIRS* under the controul of those who never travailed in birth for them, and, therefore, can never feel for them as their spiritual parents do, is a burden we cannot bear. Thus it is evident, that both reason and scripture do, in the clearest manner, make the privilege or power now under consideration essential to the gospel-ministry.

The other duty, mentioned under this article, of regulating the band-society, is of great consequence, as will appear when we come to enlarge upon the 3d section of the 2d chapter.

6. As the Lord is a God of order, and not of confusion, it is highly necessary that *one person* should be invested with the regulation of the watch-nights and love-feasts: and who would be so proper, in the absence of the presiding elder, as the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit? As to watch-nights, we may observe, Did our Lord spend whole nights in prayer? Matt. xiv. 23—25. Mark vi. 46—48. Luke vi. 12. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued *all night* in prayer to God." Did St. Paul also employ whole nights in instructing and praying with the church of God? Acts xx. 7—11. "When he [Paul] had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, *even till break of day*, so he departed." And shall not the ministers and people of God in these

*days* imitate such great examples? Shall the dissipated and profane revel and watch, night after night, in the service of Satan, and shall we think it too much to watch and pray sometimes for a few hours together?

Our venerable leader, Mr. Wesley, was in this, as in most of his rules, lead on by divine Providence. When informed, about the year 1740, that the congregation at Kingswood, near Bristol, frequently continued in exhortation and prayer till midnight, he had thoughts of suppressing such meetings: but when, after sufficient inquiry, he found that the power of God was remarkably present on those occasions, and that many were awakened, justified, or sanctified, he bowed under the hand of God, and not only permitted the continuance of them in Kingswood, but introduced them through the connection, and was, to his dying hour, fully convinced of their blessed effects.

In respect to our love-feasts, we shall speak of them in our notes on the 4th section of the 2d chapter.

7. Though the presiding elder is far more proper to preside at the quarterly meetings than any other who regularly attends, yet the preacher, who has the oversight of the circuit is, next to him, the most likely to be impartial.\* It is on this principle, that the twelve judges of England make it a rule, that no one of them shall take that circuit which includes the place where he was born. Besides, every thing is finally determined by a majority of votes. On those extraordinary occasions, therefore, when through sickness, or any other unavoidable hindrance, the presiding elder is absent, the next to him in office must be the moderator of the meeting. See the notes on the 5th section of this chapter. Let us all be willing to submit to that due subjection, which is necessary to the good order of the whole, "yea, all of you be subject one to another;" 1 Pet. v. 5.

8. Next to the preaching of the gospel, the spreading of religious knowledge by the press, is of the greatest moment to the people. The soul, whilst united to the body, must be daily fed with pious ideas, otherwise it will lose ground in the divine life. Though the Lord is wonderfully kind to those of his children who are so unfortunate as not to be able to read, yet we are to

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\* We do not mean that he is likely to have more grace or more integrity than the other members of the quarterly meeting, but only that he is not so much exposed to the temptations of prejudging a cause through consanguinity, affection, or a variety of other interests, as the other members are. We have a high esteem for all our official members, and would not intentionally offend them on any account.

use all the means in our power. And though the bible be infinitely preferable to all other books, yet we are, even on that very account, to study the writings of those spiritual and great divines, who have by their comments, essays, sermons, or other labours, explained the bible: otherwise, we ought not to attend the preaching of the gospel; for what is *that* but an explanation and application of the great truths contained in the bible. He, therefore, who has the charge of the circuit, is to be diligent in the sale of those books, which, according to the judgment of our conferences and bishops, are deemed profitable for the souls of our people. St. Paul had need of books, otherwise he would not have carried them with him in his extensive travels. "The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, *and the books*, but especially *the parchments*,"\* 2 Tim. iv. 13. And to minds which are influenced by the love of God and man, the consideration that the profit of these books is wholly applied to the work of God, will be a further inducement to them to purchase our books.

9. It is necessary that the yearly conference should have an exact account of the numbers in society, and of every thing material relating to each circuit under its controul, otherwise it could not possibly judge of the progress of the work, and the fidelity of the preachers: nor could the episcopacy have otherwise such complete knowledge of every thing for the stationing of the preachers. "Let all things be done," says St. Paul, "decently, and in order."

10. It is also necessary, that the presiding elder should receive regular details of the proceedings of those who have the oversight of circuits, that he himself may have such a clear knowledge of the state of the district, as may enable him to fill up his important trust, and to give such information of his district to the bishops, as may afford them a complete view of the whole. Thus are many eyes opened upon the great work, and the wisdom of many united upon the good of the whole. "In the multitude of counsellors," says the wise man, "there is safety."

11. The people of our special charge want all the advice we can give them: and their stations and circumstances are so different, that the rule of meeting the men and women apart, and, when the society is large, and the time will admit of it, the married and single men apart, and the married and single women apart, has been attended with many blessings. Mr. Wesley, from happy experience, considered this as a very profitable means of grace.

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\* i. e. *The books, written on parchment, the art of printing not being known in those days.*

Ministers of the gospel should think no labour lost, or means in vain, by which they may be enabled to give their whole flock their due spiritual portion. "The Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, That he will make him ruler over all that he hath," Luke xii. 42—44.

12. As the public money should be applied with the greatest fidelity, the accounts should be examined with the strictest scrutiny: and, therefore, the preacher who has the charge of the circuit is to examine the stewards' accounts, as a preparative to their being laid before the quarterly meeting: and this not out of disrespect to the stewards, whom we highly esteem for their disinterested labours of love, but to prevent, as far as possible, even any plausible pretence for suspicion. "It is required in stewards," says the apostle, "that a man be found faithful." No person of integrity (and such we have reason to believe all our stewards are, without exception) will object to this rule.

13 & 14. The quarterly collections *in the classes*, &c. according to the abilities of our friends, are the chief support of the work.

15 & 16. One of the greatest charities upon earth is the raising of buildings for public worship and the preaching of the gospel. "How shall they call on him," says the apostle, "in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things," Rom. x. 14, 15. But the preachers who are sent of God, must have a place to assemble their hearers, otherwise they can but seldom deliver their message. Little good will be done, if they can have *only* the open air to preach in: because the Lord will not work unnecessary miracles. Where a few persons, or many, have raised a house for God, and continue to live to God themselves, they will receive from the nature of distributive justice, a *proportionable share of the reward, for all the souls saved in or by the means of that building and the ordinances administered there, as long as the building lasts*. And though no finite being could make the due distribution in so intricate a case, yet he who is infinite Wisdom *can* do it, and *will* do it, when he sits on his great white throne. And the preacher who has the charge of the circuit will also have his share of the reward, by using all his influence, on such occasions, to set on foot and recommend the necessary subscriptions and collections.

We are now to give the reasons for the further directions given in this section to him who has the charge of the circuit.

1. A Catalogue of the members of the society in towns, is highly necessary to enable the preachers to perform the great duty of visiting our people from house to house. But concerning this duty see the 15th section of this chapter.

2 & 3. If his successor have not an exact account left him of the state of the circuit, it will be impossible for him to be so extensively useful for a considerable time as he otherwise might be. Every preacher should enter upon his work on the fairest ground, and with the completest view possible of what was before him. "Behold," says the prophet, speaking of the Messiah, "his work is before him," Isa. lxii. 11. And so should it be with every minister of Christ, in his measure and degree.

4. The fourth direction is exceedingly weighty. It makes the principal part of his office. But on the rules of the society we shall speak largely, when we consider the 1st section of the 2d chapter.

5. He is also to regulate all the bands in his circuit. See chap. 2. sect. 3.

6. In every thing there must be order; though frequently what the world calls *confusion*, is *order* in the sight of God. However, the zeal of happy, pious souls may carry them to many extremes, if not under proper restriction. "Let your moderation be known unto all men," Phil. iv. 5.

7. We are but one body of people, one grand society, whether in Europe or America; united in the closest spiritual bonds, and in external bonds as far as the circumstances of things will admit. And as our numbers have increased exceedingly both in Europe and America, it is necessary we should be particularly cautious in receiving strangers into our society, under the pretext of their having been members in other places; as the one end of our whole plan is to *raise a holy people*. On this account all our conferences throughout the world mutually require, that every member of our society who changes his place of abode, shall previously obtain a certificate from the preacher who has the charge of his circuit, who is most likely to be acquainted with his character, his own relations excepted; and that without such certificate he shall not be received into any other society. Even in the primitive church, St. Paul saw it necessary to write to his Philipians, "Brethren, — *Mark them* which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ," Phil. iii. 17, 18. How much more then is it our duty to use every precaution to preserve the purity of our church, in these days, when persecution has ceased, and it is the interest of many to be united to a religious party. Nor is it sufficient for the per-

son removing to carry *his ticket* with him, as he might have been expelled from our communion, and yet have preserved his ticket.

8. The 8th direction is of great moment, especially to professors of religion, that the gospel be not blamed—that the world may not have it in their power to accuse pure religion with making men careless or negligent of themselves. “Know ye not that *your body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God? and ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God *in your body*, and in your spirit, which are God’s,” 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

9. We do nothing secretly. We wish the whole world to know every part of our economy, and more especially the rules of our society, so necessary *for every member of it at least* to be thoroughly acquainted with. We have also enacted this rule, that christian fellowship in general, and particularly that mode of christian communion which has proved so beneficial to ourselves and to myriads now in glory, may be strongly and repeatedly recommended to all who truly fear God. “Ye know,” says the apostle to the elders of the church of Ephesus, “how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,” Acts xx. 18—20. where the apostle by the word *you* means the whole church, of whom the elders were the chief organs.

10. For christians to appeal to the judges of the world in matters of controversy or litigation, is strongly censured by the word of God. “Dare any of you,” says the apostle, “having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I SPEAK TO YOUR SHAME. Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now, therefore, *there is* UTTERLY *a fault among you*, because ye go to law one with another: why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” 1 Cor. vi. 1—7. But as we would by no means wish that ministers of the gospel should interfere *as judges* of such affairs, it is directed, that the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall (after consulting the leaders and stewards, *if agreeable to their advice*) recommend a scriptural arbitration to the contending parties: and as our rules declare that “Brother shall not go to law with brother,” he shall exclude that party which refuses so equitable a proposal. And we will take the liberty of adding, that where the contending parties are of two different *religious societies*, the only *christian*

method we know of, on which they could proceed, would be for each of them to choose an arbiter out of his own society, and for those two to choose a third; or to proceed on some similar plan.

11. The authority of appointing prayer-meetings will not, we think, be disputed by any. Many of our greatest revivals have been begun and chiefly carried on in our prayer-meetings. We wish that the utmost zeal might be manifested by those who have the charge of circuits in the execution of this direction. The sacred writer describing the effects of the day of Pentecost, observes, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about *three thousand souls*. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," Acts ii. 41, 42. There is no doubt but those words refer to *social* worship. O that every family in our connection had occasionally a prayer-meeting at stated times for the benefit of their neighbours! There would be no danger of wanting persons to pray: God would pour forth the spirit of grace and supplication; and soon the flame of divine love would glow through every civilized part of this vast continent. The Lord hasten the day!

12. Public fasts are to be appointed by him at the regular times, and he is of course to take care, that himself and his helpers not only set the example, but also render those days peculiarly profitable by public meetings for the service of God. 2 Chron. xx. 3. Jehoshaphat—proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. Ezra. viii. 21. Ezra proclaimed a fast at the river Ahava. Isa. lviii. 3. In the day of your fast, you find pleasure. Jer. xxxvi. 9. They proclaimed a fast before the Lord to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people that came from the cities of Judah unto Jerusalem. Joel i. 14. Sanctify a fast, call an assembly: and ii. 15. Jonah iii. 5. The people of Ninevah believed God, and proclaimed a fast. Matt. ix. 15. Jesus said unto them, can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. See also Mark ii. 18—20. and Luke 33—35.

13. The whole organization of our church depends on an exact attention to all its distinctions and orders. "I am with you in the Spirit," says St. Paul to his Colossians, "*joying and beholding your order*," Col. ii. 5. The Lord wills that we should fight in his great cause *lawfully*: "if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive *lawfully*," 2 Tim. ii. 5. Therefore the church of God is compared to an army with banners: Cant. vi. 4. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah; comely as Jerusalem; terrible as an army with banners." It has been, we doubt not, the close order and organization of our



church, under the grace and providence of God, which has enabled us to resist all the shocks we have lately felt from the satanical spirit of division, and to remain firm as a rock.

We may just add, that it is customary for the presiding elders, or in their absence the preachers who have the charge of circuits, to hold quarterly, or half-yearly conferences with the local preachers and exhorters respectively under their care, to examine into their grace, gifts and usefulness, and into the state of the work of God—a custom of exceeding great utility, and, therefore, such as, we trust, will never be neglected.

## S E C T I O N XI.

*Of the Trial of those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW shall we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

*Ans. 1.* Let the following questions be asked, viz. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

## N O T E S.

We have enlarged on the present subject in our notes on the 8th section of this chapter. Every reader may from hence perceive the care we take in receiving our preachers and ministers. As the presiding elders, or those who have the charge of cir-

cuits, are attentive to the examination of the local preachers and exhorters, so the yearly conferences are attentive to the gifts, grace, and usefulness of all the travelling preachers and ministers. Nothing will do for us without *the life of God*. Brilliant parts, fine addresses, &c. are to us but tinkling cymbals, when destitute of the power of the Holy Ghost.

At the same time we are far from despising *talents* which may be rendered useful to the church of Christ. We know the worth of improved abilities: and nothing can equal our itinerant plan, in the opportunity it affords of suiting our various societies with men of God, who are endued with gifts agreeable to their respective wants.

The following texts may illustrate the present subject. Gal. i. 15, 16. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, *to reveal his Son in me*, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." You may here observe, that Christ *was revealed in* St. Paul, that he might preach. This is an essential requisite for every preacher of the gospel: and he who attempts to enter into the sheepfold by any other door, than Christ—Christ revealed in him, and moving him by his Spirit to preach the word, is a thief and a robber; but, blessed be God, "the sheep will not follow him, but flee from him!" See the 10th chapter of St. John. Again, St. Paul desires his Ephesians to pray "always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and" to watch "thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; *and for me*," adds he, "that *utterance* may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak," Eph. vi. 18—20. If the apostle had need of the prayers of the saints, that he might have the *spiritual* gift of *utterance*, how much more need, alas! have we? Once more, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in *fleshy* tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3. Here was *fruit*! The Lord grant us much of *this fruit*!

## SECTION XII.

### *Of the Matter and Manner of Preaching, and of other public Exercises.*

Quest. 1. **W**HAT is the best general method of preaching?

*Ans.* 1. To convince: 2. To offer Christ: 3. To invite: 4. To build up: And to do this in some measure in every sermon.

*Quest.* 2. What is the most effectual way of preaching Christ?

*Ans.* The most effectual way of preaching Christ, is to preach him in all his offices; and to declare his law, as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches.

*Quest.* 3. Are there any smaller advices, which might be of use to us?

*Ans.* Perhaps these: 1. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation. 2. Begin at the time appointed. 3. Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn. 4. Always suit your subject to your audience. 5. Choose the plainest text you can. 6. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand. 7. Take care of any thing awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation. 8. Print nothing without the approbation of the conference, or of one of the bishops. 9. Do not usually pray *ex tempore* above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission. 10. Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of scripture; and let young preachers often exhort without taking a text. 11. Always avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion.

## N O T E S.

The preaching of the gospel is of the first importance to the welfare of mankind; and, consequently, *the mode* of preaching must be of considerable moment. It is not the fine metaphysical reasoning: it is not the philosophical disquisitions of the works of nature under the pretext of raising up our minds to the great Creator, which regenerate the heart, and stamp the image of God upon the soul. No. The preacher must,

1. Convince the sinner of his dangerous condition. He must "break up the fallow ground."\* "Cry aloud, spare not," says the Lord to his prophet, "lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins," *Isai. lviii. 1.* He must set forth the depth of original sin, and shew the sinner how far he is gone from original righteousness; he must describe the vices of the world in their just and most striking colours, and enter into all the sinner's pleas and excuses for sin, and drive him from all his subtrefuges and strongholds. He must labour to convince the formalist of the impossibility of being justified before God by his ceremonial or moral righteousness. Myriads are continually perishing, yea, thousands of those who acknowledge in speculation the great truths of the gospel, through their dependance upon ordinances or upon an outwardly moral life. "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*," *Gal. vi. 15.* See the texts on the 8th and 9th articles of religion.

2. He must set forth the virtue of the *atoning blood*. He must bring the mourner to a *present* Saviour: he must shew the willingness of Christ *this moment* to bless him, and bring a present salvation *home* to his soul. Here he must be indeed a *son of consolation*. He must say nothing which can keep the trembling mourner at a distance: he must not provide for him a rich feast, and hand it up to him in dishes too hot to be touched. There must be nothing now held forth to the view of the penitent but the everlasting arms, and the mercy which is ready to embrace him on every side. "Come unto me," says our Lord, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest," *Matt. xi. 28.* "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," *John vi. 37.* "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,—let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," &c. *Heb. x. 19—22.*

3. He must, like a true shepherd, feed the lambs and sheep of Christ. He must point out to the newly justified the wiles of Satan, and strengthen them if they stagger through unbelief. He must set before them the glorious privileges offered to them in the gospel. He must nourish them with the pure milk of the word. Those who are more adult in grace, he must feed with strong meat. He must shew them the necessity of being crucified to the world, and of dying daily: that "if they mortify not the deeds of the flesh, they shall die." He must not spare the remaining man of sin: he must anatomize the human heart, and follow self-will and self-love through all their windings. And all this being addressed to the children of God, he must do it

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\* *Jer. iv. 3. Hos. x. 12.*

with great tenderness. "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, *I die daily*," says the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 31. "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live," Rom viii. 13. "*Grow in grace*, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18.

And now he must again turn the son of consolation. He must hold forth Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, as "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25. He must describe to them, in all its richest views, the blessing of perfect love. He must now declare how our great Zerubbabel is *this moment* able and willing to reduce the mountain into a plain. And all the above he must endeavour more or less to introduce into every sermon which he delivers to a mixed congregation. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also *will do it*," 1 Thess. v. 23. "This is the will of God, even your sanctification," iv. 3.

He must preach the law as well as the gospel. He must hold forth our adorable Redeemer as a prophet to teach, a priest to atone, and a king to reign in us and over us. He must break the *stony* heart, as well as bind up the *broken*. But still *holiness* inward and outward must be his end: *holiness* must be his aim: and antinomianism and every doctrine which opposes *holiness*, he must contend with, till he gain the victory, or render his hearers utterly inexcusable. Who is fit for these things? O Lord God, help us all! Let us do our utmost, and leave the blessing to the Lord.

Acts iii. 22. "A *prophet* shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren." Heb. v. 6, "Thou art a *Priest* for ever." Isai. xxxii. 1. "Behold a *king* shall reign in righteousness." O let us never be wearied of exalting Christ, as *living in us*, as well as *dying for us*.

Some useful smaller advices are now given, 1. Never break an engagement. This we have enlarged upon under the 8th section of this chapter.

2. The second advice belongs only to town-congregations, where they have clocks and watches to direct them. In such cases, if they attend not exactly at the appointed time, they will be equally tardy, if the preacher *habitually* wait for them ever so long. But every where let *him* be always at the time. It is inexcusable in *one* to make a thousand, or even a hundred, wait for *him*. Let "no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way," Rom. xiv. 13.

3. The deepest seriousness at all times becomes the minister of the gospel: but in the pulpit there should not be even *the appearance* of a deviation from it. An ambassador of an earthly government, when immediately engaged in the duties of his embassy, would be far from trifling: how much more should an ambassador of God? "Do the work," therefore, "of an *evangelist*, make full proof of thy ministry," 2 Tim. 4. 5.

4. A preacher who seeks the honour which comes from God, and not that which comes from man, will consider the spiritual wants of his audience, and choose his text and subject accordingly. He will not preach to shew his own abilities, but merely *to do good*. And indeed, if he preach not from *this pure motive alone*, he has no right to expect the blessing of God upon his labours. See Luke xii. 42—44.

5. Be cautious of allegorizing. It seldom informs the judgment, and still seldomer warms the heart. It may be called a *pretty way* of talking. The preacher may be admired, but the hearer will be little edified. And what is applause, or any thing but the salvation of souls, to the faithful minister of Christ? The genuine language of his heart is, "I ask not riches, honours, or pleasures, gain or applause; I ask only for the salvation of souls!" "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.

6. When the preacher has fixed upon the subject which he judges most suitable to the states of the souls he is going to address, he must keep to his point. He must labour to arrange his ideas, and to speak to the understanding as well as the heart. He must first endeavour fully to explain, and then to apply, to "shew" himself "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Tim. ii. 15.

7. He must take care, that his good be not evil spoken of, or laughed at, if possible, through any awkward or unmeaning gestures in the pulpit. When the instruction of immortal spirits is his employment, he should mind every thing little and great, which can assist him in this glorious work, in which angels would envy him, if it were possible for them to indulge so base a passion. "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee," Tit. ii. 15.

8. Be not too forward in writing for the press. Nothing disgraces a cause so much, as to attempt to defend it in a feeble manner. Let not a few friends who are attached to you, and are not in the least degree judges of composition, prevail upon you to become an author. To write well requires a life devoted in a great measure to close and severe study. Preaching the everlasting gospel and spiritual instruction in season and out of season,

are your grand-objects. There are so many excellent publications already in the world, which by the means of the press may be put into every hand, that there are fewer necessary to be written than many imagine. A few good writers in one church are quite sufficient, especially in ours, which has already been honoured with a Wesley and a Fletcher. But particularly comply with our express rules on this subject. "Of making many books there is no end," says the wise man; Eccles. xii. 12.

9. Scarcely any thing tends to damp divine service more than to be praying too long, and in a languid manner. Few things more tend to bring a congregation into a *formal* spirit. Sometimes indeed the minister is led within the veil in an unusual way, and may then justly give full vent to the holy flame. But on other occasions let the prayer be very fervent, and of a moderate length. "When ye pray" says our Lord, "use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them," Matt. vi. 7, 8.

10. A comment on a portion of scripture is sometimes very profitable to the congregation, especially when a warm application is adjoined. And it is exceedingly useful for young preachers to habituate themselves to the giving of warm exhortations, otherwise they may get into a formal way of preaching without a due application of the subject. *A fervent exhortation is preferable to a sermon without application.* "Till I come," says St. Paul to Timothy, "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine," 1 Ep. iv. 13.

11. Souls are of so much value, that we should improve every opportunity for their good. Shall the men of the world have carnal festivals on their birth-days, and shall we not commemorate the birth-day of our Lord? The primitive fathers of the church observed *the day*, which is *now* kept sacred by most of the churches of christendom. Irenæus who was one of the fathers, was a disciple of St. John; and the mother of Jesus lived with *that apostle* from the crucifixion of our Lord. There cannot therefore be a doubt but St. John knew, and of course his disciples, Irenæus, Ignatius, and Polycarp, the day of our Lord's nativity; and *from them* all the fathers of the church. Again, shall states and nations celebrate the day of liberation from slavery or oppression, or some other glorious event, from year to year? And shall *we* not celebrate by a holy festival the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord, and the mission of the Holy Spirit, to which we are indebted for blessings infinitely more valuable than any which the revolution of states can possibly afford.

## SECTION XIII.

*Of the Duty of Preachers to God, themselves, and one another.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW shall a Preacher be qualified for his charge?

*Ans. w.* By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: And by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular.

*Quest. 2.* Do we sufficiently watch over each other?

*Ans. w.* We do not. Should we not frequently ask each other, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which the conference advises? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? To be more particular: Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons? They are either instituted or prudential.

I. The instituted are,

1. Prayer; private, family, public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these? Do you forecast daily wherever you are, to secure time for private devotion? Do you practise it every where? Do you ask every where, Have you family-prayer? Do you ask individuals, Do you use private prayer every morning and evening in particular?

2. Searching the scriptures, by

(1) Reading; constantly, some part of every day; regularly, all the bible in order; carefully, with notes seriously, with prayer before and after: fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there?

(2) Meditating: At set times? By rule?

(3) Hearing: Every opportunity? With prayer before, at, after? Have you a bible always about you?

3. The Lord's supper: Do you use this at every



opportunity? With solemn prayer before? With earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

4. Fasting: Do you use as much abstinence and fasting every week, as your health, strength, and labour will permit?

5. Christian conference: Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to order your conversation aright? Is it always in grace? Seasoned with salt? Meet to minister grace to the hearers? Do you not converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view? And to pray before and after it?

II. Prudential means we may use, either as christians, as Methodists, or as preachers.

1. As christians: What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

2. As Methodists: Do you never miss your class or band?

3. As Preachers: have you thoroughly considered your duty? And do you make a conscience of executing every part of it? Do you meet every society? Also, the leaders and bands?

These means may be used without fruit. But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

1. Do you steadily watch against the world? Your self? Your besetting sin?

2. Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense? Imagination? Honour? Are you temperate in all things? Instance in food. (1) Do you use only that kind, and that degree, which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? (2) Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner? (3) Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul? (4) Do you chuse and use water for your common drink? And only take wine medicinally or sacramentally?

3. Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross, however grievous to nature, as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

4. Do you endeavour to set God always before you? To see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means, but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.

## N O T E S.

The present section is full of matter. Sermons might be written upon it without exhausting it. It includes the whole of christianity. We can only give a few leading ideas on each article.

1. A minister of the gospel, who has consecrated all he is and has, and all he can do and suffer, to the service of his God, should consider himself as eminently called to *walk with God*. His peculiar calling is of the most public nature. It is a public profession, that he is a reformer of mankind: it says more loudly than any words, "I am, or ought to be, one of the best of men; follow me as I follow Christ." It is the very depth of hypocrisy to preach and not live the gospel. Of all hypocrites such a one is the greatest. Nay, it is in vain to preach, it is in vain to shew forth the most shining talents, if the life of the preacher correspond not with his doctrines. He may possibly have the reward he seeks for here below: but the approbation of God he never will receive. "Many will say to me in that day," observes our Lord, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matt. vii. 22, 23.

The work of God must also lie near his heart: yea, his very soul must enter into it. Nor must he be contented to preach, and then leave the souls he has been blessed to at the mercy of the world. He must seek out the awakened. He must fence in the flock. He must not only love, but, according to his sphere of action, recommend and enforce christian discipline, especially the discipline of that church of which he is a member; without which there would be nothing but anarchy and confusion; and the word of God would in general become "like water spilt upon the ground." "Neither count I my life dear unto myself," says St. Paul, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," Acts xx. 24.

2. The preachers should tell each other in the spirit of love and meekness, and at the same time with humble boldness, all they think and all they fear of each other, in respect to every thing of consequence, particularly in regard to the spiritual life, the practice of devotion, and spiritual conversation. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend," says Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 6.

3. Ministers of the gospel should be eminently attentive to all the means of grace, particularly private prayer. We do rejoice that *our* ministers are examples to the flock in this respect. When in the mountains and wildernesses they have no chamber to themselves, they will retire into the woods and other solitary places, and spend much of their time in that most useful exercise. O that we may continue to preserve this spirit and practice! "Thou, when thou prayest," says Christ, "enter into thy closet: and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly," Matt. vi. 6. We should also in the families, where we from time to time reside, be examples to all. The whole world is composed of families. A travelling preacher may bring as many souls to glory by his fidelity in the families which he visits, as by his public preaching. See the 15th section of this chapter.

4. Preachers of the gospel should be much conversant in the Scriptures. They should never be without a bible. That invaluable book is like the starry heavens on a clear night: cast your eyes on any given part, and some bright stars will immediately strike your sight; but the more you gaze, the more stars will appear to your view. It is an inexhaustible mine of the richest treasures. The more infidels despise and oppose it, the more should we love, study, and defend it. It is reproachful to see a minister of God *lounging away* his time, when the word of truth and salvation is within his reach. "I love thy commandments," says the psalmist, "above gold, yea, above fine gold," Psalm cix. 127. "My soul hath kept thy testimonies: and *I love them exceedingly*, ver. 167. "and *thy law is my delight*," ver. 174.

5. Whenever we have opportunity to eat of the bread and drink of the cup of the Lord, we should not only as far as possible make it a blessing to others, but also to ourselves. See the texts quoted in the notes on the 16th and 18th articles of religion.

6. The duty of fasting is strongly recommended in the sacred writings. That or abstinence frequently observed, is highly necessary for the divine life. Ps. xxxv. 13. "I humbled my soul with *fasting*." lxix. 10. "When I wept and chastened my soul with *fasting*." cix. 24. "My knees are weak through *fasting*." Dan. ix. 3. "I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with *fasting*." Joel ii. 12. "Turn ye even

unto me with all your heart, and with *fasting*, and with weeping, and with mourning." Matt. vi. 16—18. " *When ye fast*, be not as the hypocrites.—But thou, *when thou fastest*, anoint thine head, &c.—that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret, &c." Matt. xvii. 14—21. " This kind goeth not out but by prayer and *fasting*." See also Mark ix. 29. Luke ii. 37. " She [Anna] served God with *fastings*, and prayers night and day." Acts x. 30. " Four days ago I [Cornelius] was *fasting* until this hour, &c." 1 Cor. vii. 5. " That ye may give yourselves to *fasting* and prayer." 2 Cor. vi. 5. " In watchings, *in fastings*." xi. 27. " in hunger and thirst, *in fastings often*."

7. How awful are those words of our Lord, " By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," Matt. xii. 37. When the conversation is always "seasoned with salt," you will never lose a day: your whole life will be a constant blessing to all around you: "only-let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ," Phil. i. 27.

8. What lives should they live, who bear the sacred name of *christian*, and especially of *christian minister*. The infidels themselves, in general, will acknowledge the excellence of the *christian* morality. But where say they is the man who comes up to the model? They know him not, because to the poor the gospel is preached. They despise the poor and the ministers of the poor. O that the screen of formalism and hypocrisy was but removed, that the church of God might become the city set upon a hill! And it *shall* be removed. The Lord Jesus has already given the outward court to be trodden under foot by the gentiles; and the whole temple of God shall soon be cleansed, and Israel shall dwell alone. How soon would this be brought about, if all the ministers of the gospel did but answer the model, "by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left!" 2 Cor. vi. 6, 7.

9. Methodist preachers should *love* every part of their duty. It is *love* alone which can oil the wheels, and make them run in the paths of duty like the chariots of Aminidab. Where slavish fear is the base motive, all is misery. But when we do every thing in the spirit of love, when "the love of Christ constraineth us," all is delight. 2 Cor. v. 14.

10. A Methodist preacher has raised up his standard, and declared open war against the vices of the world. He must expect to be hated or despised by all men, except the children of God, and those who are seeking so to be. This is his great advantage, if he bear it with patience. The wall of contempt which surrounds him, preserves him from a thousand temptations to which

other ministers are exposed. But he has a world within him far more dangerous,—“the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life,” 1 John ii. 16. Every converted person knows his besetting sin; and this will attack him, and conquer him, among professors, among possessors of grace, yea, in the most solitary place, *unless he watches unto prayer*. “Be not conformed to this world,” Rom. xii. 2. “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,” Heb. xii. 1.

11. The true minister of Christ delights in the cross. His adorable Lord has consecrated it, and he takes it up with cheerfulness, and “follows the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” The love of God in his heart makes bitter things sweet, and difficult things easy. “He is temperate in all things.” He eyes God in every thing, and “walks with God.” God is the joy of his heart, and the delight of his eyes, and his all-sufficient portion. “Thou, God, seest me,” is written upon his inmost soul. “Whether he eats or drinks, or whatsoever he doth, he doth it all to the glory of God,” 1 Cor. x. 31. “If any man will come after me,” says Christ, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,” Matt. xvi. 24. See also Mark viii. 34, and Luke 9. 24.

## S E C T I O N XIV.

*Rules by which we should continue, or desist from, Preaching at any Place.*

*Quest. 1.* **I**S it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies?

*Ans.* By no means: We have made the trial in various places; and that for a considerable time. But all the seed has fallen by the way-side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

*Quest. 2.* Where should we endeavour to preach most?

*Ans. 1.* Where there are the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers.

2. Where there is the most fruit.

*Quest. 3.* Ought we not diligently to observe, in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

*Ans.* We ought : And at that time, to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest.

## N O T E S.

1. The answer to the first question of this section, given in Europe by Mr. Wesley, after long experience and extensive travels, is a proof of the importance of christian discipline. Where the people despise or neglect christian discipline or fellowship, little or no good is ever done. It is indeed a proof that few in such cases are awakened. The awakened soul is ready to embrace every assistance, which the word of God recommends, and the circumstances of things will admit of. Mal. iii. 16—18. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and the Lord hearkened, and heard it : and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked ; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

2. Our life is short. We must not only do good, but *the most* in our power. As we should, on the one hand, prefer a small congregation to a large one, if the small one produces a company of precious souls united in love to God and each other, whilst the large one affords none but those who live in the spirit of the world : so, on the other hand, we should prefer the largest congregation with proportionable fruit to any other consideration. In short, nothing should, *nothing will*, influence the true minister of Christ but the glory of God, the salvation of souls, crucifixion to the world and all things in it, and the life of God in the soul of man. Comfortable lodgings, agreeable food, or the company of persons of improved minds, will never for a moment *by him* be put into the balance. His single question at all times and in all places will be, "Where shall I bring most souls to Jesus Christ?" "Say not ye," observes our Lord, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest," John iv. 35. *That* is the gospel-call for the labourer.

3. He will, therefore, above all things, attend to the out-pourings of grace. He will labour most, where the Lord most abundantly pours forth his Spirit. And this will be the conduct not only of a single individual, but of general bodies of faithful ministers. Our yearly conferences constantly take this point into consideration. The stationing of the preachers is in the episco-

pacy; but the determination of the number of preachers to be sent to a circuit is in the yearly conference; with powers invested in the episcopacy and presiding-eldership to meet the openings of grace and Providence in the intervals of the conference. We must in all things follow, and not run before the Lord. It is a great thing to study the will of God in his word and providence unitedly considered. "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost," says St. Paul; "for a great and effectual door is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." However numerous or great his opposers may be, the true minister of Christ improves the gracious opportunity God is pleased to put into his hands, with thankfulness and zeal.

## SECTION XV.

*Of visiting from House to House, guarding against those Sins that are so common to Professors, and enforcing Practical Religion.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW can we further assist those under our care?

*Ans.* By instructing them at their own houses. What unspeakable need is there of this! The world says, "*The Methodists are no better than other people.*" This is not true in the general: But, 1. Personal religion, either toward God or man, is too superficial amongst us. We can but just touch on a few particulars. How little faith is there among us? How little communion with God? How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature? How much love of the world? Desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money? How little brotherly love? What continual judging one another? What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing? What want of moral honesty? To instance only one particular;—who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling?

2. Family religion is wanting in many branches. And what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every travelling preacher must instruct the people from house to

house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be no better.

Our religion is not deep, universal, uniform : but superficial, partial, uneven. It will be so till we spend half as much time in this visiting, as we now do in talking uselessly. Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, entitled, *Gildas Salvianus*, is well worth a careful perusal. Speaking of this visiting from house to house, he says (p. 351.)

“ We shall find many hindrances, both in ourselves and the people.

1. In ourselves, there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

2. We have a base, man-pleasing temper, so that we let men perish rather than lose their love : we let them go quietly to hell, lest we should offend them.

3. Some of us have also a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil.

4. But the greatest hindrance is weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

5. Lastly, we are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers : To choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, terror, love, and meekness?”

But undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the apostle, *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the word ; be instant in season ; out of season : Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering.*

O brethren, if we could but set this work on foot in all our societies, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God ! If the common lukewarmness



were banished; and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works of God; surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is absolutely necessary to the welfare of our people, some of whom neither repent nor believe to this day. Look round, and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation. And how can you walk, and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal, and then set on them with the most vehement exhortations. O, for God's sake, and the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

What cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but engaged in it sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ? And how much holier and happier might we have made our societies before now? And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many hindrances: And so there always will be. But the greatest hindrance was in ourselves, in our littleness of faith and love.

But it is objected, I. "This will take up so much time, we shall not have leisure to follow our studies."

We answer, 1. Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is a better. 2. By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge, that of God and eternity. 3. You will have time for gaining other knowledge too. Only sleep not more than you need: "and never be idle, or triflingly employed." But, 4. If you can do but one, let your studies alone. We ought to throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

It is objected, II. "The people will not submit to it." If some will not, others will. And the success with them, will repay all your labour. O let us herein follow the example of St Paul. 1. For our general business, *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind*: 2. Our

special work, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock:* 3. Our doctrine, *Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ:* 4. The place, *I have taught you publicly, and from house to house:* 5. The object and manner of teaching, *I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears:* 6. His innocence and self-denial herein, *I have coveted no man's silver or gold:* 7. His patience, *Neither count I my life dear unto myself.* And among all other motives, let these be ever before our eyes: 1. *The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* 2. *Grievous wolves shall enter in: yea, of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things.*

Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years study. Then you will have no time to spare: You will have work enough. Then likewise no preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has lost its flavour. For to such this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the the knowledge you can procure, and grace you can attain.

The sum is, Go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, to be christians inwardly and outwardly; make every particular plain to their understandings; fix it in their minds; write it on their hearts. In order to this, there must be line upon line, precept upon precept. What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this! We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself: No idleness is consistent with a growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

*Quest. 2.* Why are we not more holy, why do we not live in eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God? Breathing the whole spirit of missionaries?

*Ans.* Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end without using the means. To touch only upon two or three instances: Who of you rises at four

Or even at five, when he does not preach? Do you know the obligation and benefit of fasting or abstinence? How often do you practise it? The neglect of this alone is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God by the habitual neglect of a plain duty. Let us amend from this hour.

*Quest.* 3. How shall we guard against sabbath-breaking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them?

*Ans.* 1. Let us preach expressly on each of these heads. 2. Read in every society the sermon on evil-speaking. 3. Let the leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. 4. Let the preachers warn every society, that none who is guilty herein, can remain with us. 5. Extirpate buying or selling goods which have not paid the duty laid upon them by government, out of every society. Let none remain with us who will not totally abstain from this evil in every kind and degree. Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing directly or indirectly, for voting at any election. Shew no respect to persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing. And strongly advise our people to discountenance all treats given by candidates before or at elections, and not to be partakers in any respect of such iniquitous practices.

*Quest.* 4. What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members fail in business, or contract debts which they are not able to pay?

*Ans.* Let him who has the charge of the circuit, desire two or three judicious members of the society to inspect the accounts of the supposed delinquent; and if he has behaved dishonestly, or borrowed money without a probability of paying, let him be expelled.

#### N O T E S.

We need not enlarge on the great duty of visiting from house to house. The section so far explains itself, and is full of the

most pathetic exhortation. We will, therefore, only make a few brief observations, and proceed.

In the plantations, which make the chief part of these states, and in which, of course, the chief part of our societies reside, the preachers cannot visit many of our competent families in a day. But they may almost daily visit many of the poor—many of those who most want their help. Various disagreeable circumstances arising from the inattention of *the poor* to cleanliness, &c. may attend our zealous observance of the directions given in this section on the present subject, as far as it respects *them*. But where is our zeal for God, where our crucifixion to the world, where our regard for souls, if such considerations move us in the least? Our Lord gives it as one grand proof of his being the Messiah, that “the poor have the gospel preached to them,” Matt. xi. 5. O then, if we love Christ, if we wish to be his ministers and disciples, let us not forget the poor. We have but little silver or gold to offer them; but we have what is infinitely more precious, even grace, pardon, holiness, Christ, heaven. Let us, therefore, labour *at least* as much in the houses of the poor as of the rich or competent: and *this we certainly shall*, if we be not interested by carnal or temporal motives—if we breathe the true spirit of missionaries.

The following texts of Scripture are applicable to the duties enforced, or the sins condemned, in this section.

1. On the relative duties. Ephes. vi. 4. *Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* See also Col. iii. 21. Ver. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.* See also Ephes. vi. 1. Col. iii. 19. *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* See also Ephes. v. 25—31. Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.* See also Col. iii. 18. Col. iv. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.* See also Ephes. vi. 9. Col. i. 22. *Servants, obey, in all things, your masters, according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.* See also Ephes. vi. 6.

2. On the observance of the sabbath. Gen. ii. 3. God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it. Exod. xx. 10, 11. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God.—Wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it. xxiii. 12. On the seventh day thou shalt rest. Numb. xv. 32—35. They found a man that gathered sticks on the sabbath-day.—And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death. See also Neh. xiii. 15—22. Isai. lviii. 13, 14. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable,

and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. lvi. 2. Blessed is the man that doeth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it; that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil. Mark ii. 28. The Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath. See also Luke vi. 5. Luke xiii. 10. He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. Acts xiii. 42—44. When the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, *the gentiles* besought that these words might be preached unto them the next sabbath-day.—And the next sabbath-day, came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God. xvi. 13. *On the sabbath* we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. xviii. 4. He reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and Greeks. Rev. i. 10. I was in the spirit *on the Lord's day*. Acts xx. 7. *On the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them. John xx. 19. Then the same day at evening, being *the first day of the week*, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, &c. I Cor. xvi. 2. *Upon the first day of the week* let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.

3. Against gossiping. I Tim. v. 13. Withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not. I Thess. iv. 11. Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you.

4. Against speaking evil. Tit. iii. 1, 2. Put them in mind—to speak evil of no man.

5. Against buying or selling goods which have not paid the legal duty. Matt. xxii. 21. Then saith he [Jesus] unto them, Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. See also Mark xii. 17. Luke xx. 25. and Rom. xiii. 6, 7.

6. Against bribery in elections. Isai. xxxiii. 15, 16. He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, *that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes*, &c. he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks.

7. Against contracting debts without being able to pay them. Rom. xiii. 8. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another. Lev. xix. 13. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour. I Thess. iv. 3—6. This is the will of God,—that no man go beyond and

defraud his brother in any matter ; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.

## S E C T I O N XVI.

### *Of the Instruction of Children.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT shall we do for the rising generation?

*Ans.* 1. Let him who is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now.

2. Where there are ten children whose parents are in society, meet them an hour once a week ; but were this is impracticable, meet them once in two weeks.

3. Procure our instructions for them, and let all who can, read and commit them to memory.

4. Explain and impress them upon their hearts.

5. Talk with them every time you see any at home.

6. Pray earnestly for them : And diligently instruct and exhort all parents at their own houses.

7. Let the elders, deacons, and preachers, take a list of the names of the children ; and if any of them be truly awakened, let them be admitted into society.

8. Preach expressly on education : “ But I have no gift for this.” Pray earnestly for the gift, and use every other means to attain it.

## N O T E S.

The proper education of children is of exceeding great moment to the welfare of mankind. About one half of the human race are under the age of sixteen, and may be considered, the infants excepted, as capable of instruction. The welfare of the states and countries in which they live, and, what is infinitely more, the salvation of their souls, do, under the grace and providence of God, depend in a considerable degree upon their education. But, alas ! the great difficulty lies in finding men and women of genuine piety as instructors. Let us, however, endeavour to supply these *spiritual* defects. Let us follow the directions of this section, and we shall meet many on the day of judgment, who will acknowledge before the Great Judge, and an assembled uni-

verse, that their first desires after Christ and salvation were received in their younger years by our instrumentality. In towns we may, without difficulty, meet the children weekly, and in the plantations advise and pray with them every time we visit their houses: Nay, in the country, if we give notice that at such a time we shall spend an hour or two in such a house with those children who shall attend, many of the neighbours will esteem it a privilege to send their children to us at the time appointed. But we must exercise much patience, as well as zeal, for the successful accomplishment of this work. And if we can with love and delight condescend to their ignorance and childishness, and yet endeavour continually to raise up their little minds to the once dying but now exalted Saviour, we shall be made a blessing to thousands of them.

But let us labour *among the poor* in this respect, as well as among the competent. O if our people in the cities, towns, and villages were but sufficiently sensible of the magnitude of this duty, and its acceptableness to God!—If they would establish sabbath-schools, wherever practicable, for the benefit of the children *of the poor*, and sacrifice a few public ordinances every Lord's-day to this charitable and useful exercise, God would be to them instead of all the means they lose; yea, they would find, to their present comfort and the increase of their eternal glory, the truth and sweetness of those words, "Mercy is better than sacrifice," Matt. ix. 13. and xii. 7. and Hof. vi. 6. But there is so much of the cross in all this! O when shall we be the true followers of a crucified Saviour!

The following scriptures enforce the present duty: Gen. xviii. 19. I [Jehovah] know him [Abraham] that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord. Deut. vi. 6, 7. These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Prov. xxii. 6. Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it. Mark x. 14. Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. 2 Tim. iii. 15. *From a child* thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.

N. B. We particularly recommend our scripture-catechism for the use of children.

## SECTION XVII.

*Of employing our Time profitably, when we are not travelling, or engaged in public Exercises.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT general method of employing our time would you advise us to?

*Ans. We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read the scriptures with notes, and the closely practical parts of what Mr. Wesley has published. 3. From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) read, with much prayer, some of our best religious tracts.*

*Quest. 2.* Why is it that the people under our care are not better?

*Ans. Other reasons may concur; but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.*

*Quest 3.* But why are we not more knowing?

*Ans. Because we are idle. We forget our first rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary." We fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of us spends as many hours a day in God's work, as he did formerly in man's work? We talk, talk—or read what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. 2. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in four and twenty. "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment. "But I have no books." Be diligent to spread the books, and you will have the use of them.*



We have already enlarged so much on the public and private duties of ministers, that on the limited plan and laconic mode we have adopted in these annotations, it may not be necessary to say much more on this subject. We would just recommend to our ministers and preachers, agreeably to the directions given in this section, *much reading and study*. We have various ranks of men to deal with, and as far as possible should be prepared for them all; that as scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, we may, like unto a man that is an householder, bring forth out of our treasures things new and old. See Matt. xiii. 52. A taste for reading profitable books is an inestimable gift. It adds to the comfort of life far beyond what many conceive, and qualifies us, if properly directed, for very extensive usefulness in the church of God. It takes off all the miserable listlessness of a sluggish life; and gives to the mind a strength and activity it could not otherwise acquire. But to obtain and preserve this taste for, this delight in, profitable reading, we must daily resist the natural tendency of man to indolence and idleness. And when we consider the astonishing activity of the enemies of revealed truth, to disseminate their pernicious doctrines, we must allow that it behoves every minister of Jesus Christ, not only to be able to "give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear," (1 Pet. iii. 15.) but to answer and silence the most subtle arguments of the professed enemies of our adorable Lord. "Till I come," says St. Paul, "GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING," 1 Tim. iv. 13. Heb. vi. 11, 12. We desire—that ye be not slothful. See also Ephes. v. 16. Col. iv. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 15. and iv. 13.

## S E C T I O N XVIII.

### *Of the Necessity of Union among ourselves.*

**L**ET us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

*Quest.* What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

*Ans.* 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak freely to each other.

3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.

4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.

5. Never speak lightly of each other.

6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.

7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other before himself.

*N. B.* We recommend a serious perusal of *The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*.

### N O T E S.

We have already in our notes on the 4th and 5th sections, enlarged on the great consequence of our union to the preservation and extension of the gracious work of God, in which we are engaged. We have also given a collection of most pointed scriptures against division and contention in our notes on the 22d article of religion, to which we particularly refer the reader. And we must also very strongly recommend all our ministers and preachers to read with the greatest attention the book which is noticed in this section, intitled *The Causes, Evils, and Cures of Heart and Church Divisions*. We could write a volume on this weighty subject. Let us preserve our union, and with the Prince of Peace at our head, we shall bear down the opposition of all our spiritual and temporal enemies. We shall imperceptibly gain ground on every hand, and be ourselves from time to time astonished at the progress of the work of God. *Love*, when properly directed by united hearts and united endeavours, is the strongest thing in the universe. But we must conclude this subject, and only leave upon your minds some additional suitable passages of THE WORD OF GOD.

Pf. cxxxiii. 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! See the whole Psalm. Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another. Ver. 18. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Rom. xii. 4, 5. *As* we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are *one body in Christ*, and every one members one of another. I Cor. xii. 12—14. As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.

For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, for the body is not one member, but many. Ver. 25—27. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Be perfect, be of good comfort, *be of one mind, live in peace*; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Eph. ii. 20—22. [Ye] are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom *ye also are builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit. iv. 3—6. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. Phil. ii. 1, 2. If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, *that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

## S E C T I O N XIX.

*Of the Method by which immoral travelling Ministers or Preachers shall be brought to trial, found guilty, and reprov'd or suspended in the Intervals of the Conferences.\**

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT shall be done when an elder, deacon, or preacher, is under the report of being guilty of *some crime*, expressly forbidden in the word of God, as an unchristian practice sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of wrath and hell?

*Ans.* Let the presiding elder, in the absence of a bishop, call as many ministers as he shall think fit, at

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\* For the trial of a bishop, see section IV.

least three, and if possible bring the accused and accuser face to face. If the person be clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from all official services in the church, till the ensuing yearly conference; at which his case shall be fully considered and determined. But if the accused be a *presiding* elder, the preachers must call in the *presiding* elder of the neighbouring district, who is required to attend, and preside at the trial.

If the accused and accuser cannot be brought face to face, but the supposed delinquent flees from trial, it shall be received as a presumptive proof of guilt; and out of the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall be condemned. Nevertheless, even in that case, the yearly conference shall re-consider the whole matter and determine.

*Quest. 2.* What shall be done in cases of improper tempers, words, or actions?

*Ans.* The person so offending shall be reprehended by his senior in office. Should a second transgression take place, one, two or three ministers or preachers are to be taken as witnesses. If he be not then cured, he shall be tried at the next yearly conference, and, if found guilty and impenitent, shall be expelled from the connection, and his name so returned in the minutes of the conference.

*Quest. 3.* What shall be done with those ministers or preachers, who hold and preach doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion?

*Ans.* Let the same process be observed as in cases of gross immorality: but if the minister or preacher so offending do solemnly engage, neither to preach nor defend such erroneous doctrines in public or in private, he shall be borne with, till his case be laid before the next yearly conference, which shall determine the matter.

Provided nevertheless, that in all the above-mentioned cases of trial and conviction, an appeal to the ensuing general conference shall be allowed.

## N O T E S.

The section now under consideration is of very great moment. Let us take a view of it under the three heads into which it divides itself.

I. The answer to the first question serves to remove every reasonable objection to the *suspending* power of the presiding elder. See section the 5th of this chapter. The trial of a minister or preacher for gross immorality shall be in the presence of at least three ministers. These ministers have, of course, full liberty to speak their sentiments either in favour or disfavour of the person accused. This must always serve as a strong check on the presiding elder, respecting the abuse of his power. An act of tyranny would be so opposed by the ministers present, and so represented afterwards in favour of the oppressed, that the presiding elder who would venture upon an arbitrary step, would find himself dreadfully embarrassed. Besides, those ministers could lay the whole affair before the general conference, if near at hand; or before the ensuing yearly conference; or, as soon as possible, before a bishop: in which cases, the injured person might have complete redress, and the presiding elder censured or punished according to his deserts: and those ministers could give all possible information, having been present at the whole of the trial.

The passage in St. Matthew, ch. xviii. 15—17. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone," &c. has nothing to do with the present subject. We are now speaking of *gross* immoralities committed by preachers of the gospel. This does not concern the *infracts* of a private person, but the *gross offence* of a minister against the church of God. Undoubtedly, a minister so offending should not be suffered to remain in his office till the next yearly conference, as many souls might be ruined thereby in the interval. There is certainly as much mercy due to the people as to the minister; and in the present instance more, as he is but one, and they are many: and he is invested with his office, not for their *destruction*, but for their *edification*. See 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. But scarcely any thing can be more destructive to the cause of God than the immoral life of a minister. Such an Achan in the camp must, more or less, bring down a curse upon the cause. 1 Sam. ii. 27—29. "There came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord,——Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and *honourest thy sons above me,*" &c. Ver. 12. "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." iii. 11—14. "The Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things

which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity *which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not,*" &c. See that whole history. Matt. vii. 22, 23. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, *ye that work iniquity.*" Rom. ii. 3. "Think-est thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and *doest the same,* that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" 1 Tim. v. 19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but *before two or three witnesses.*"

2. The mode of process directed in the answer to the second question, is nearly according to our Lord's directions, concerning the offences of the private members of a church, in Matt. xviii. 15—17. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." 1st. The preacher is to be reprov'd by his senior in office. On a second offence, the minister reprehending, is to take with him one, two, or three witnesses: and if still incurable, the offender is to be brought before that part of the church, to which he is particularly responsible, namely, the yearly conference. He is not to be tried by the members of his circuit or district, for *they* are the complainants—the persons supposed to be aggrieved,—but by his elders and equals. There is, however, a considerable difference between the persons concerned, in the directions given by our Lord in the portion of Scripture quoted above, and those who are adverted to in the present section. *That scripture* evidently refers to the private members of a church; and *the minister himself*, after private reproof and public reprehension, first before two or three witnesses, and then before the church, is to exclude the person, if impenitent. But of this we shall treat largely, when we come to consider the 8th section of the 2d chapter. *Improper tempers*, manifested in the conversation or conduct of a minister of the gospel, may be productive of more evil, than all his public labours can possibly compensate. But at the same time, he may not be so criminal, but that he may be borne with for a time, in hope of reformation.

N. B. The reason why the expression *one, two, or three witnesses* is mentioned in the section under this head, is, because it

may, in some instances, be impossible to have more than *one* besides the reprehending minister, without sending to a neighbouring circuit : and as no public censure can pass upon the offending preacher in this case till the sitting of the yearly conference, it would not be proper to take a minister of the gospel from his labours in another circuit, for two or three days, to answer the present purpose.

"The servant of the Lord," says St. Paul, "must not strive ; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient ; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. "He [Christ] turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," Luke ix. 55.

3. It will, we believe, be allowed by all who love the truth as it is in Jesus, that the heretical doctrines are as dangerous, at least to the hearers, as the immoral life of a preacher ; and, therefore, the same process is provided for both cases. Those must indeed be blind, who can sit for any time under the ministry of an arian, socinian, universalian, or any other heretical minister : "and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch," Matt. xv. 14. and Luke vi. 39. But as we would guard against a hasty and arbitrary measure in a matter which sometimes, perhaps, it may be difficult to determine, the case alluded to at present shall lie over to the yearly conference, if the preacher be perfectly silent, in public and private, on the subjects objected to. But if he will go on to dishonour Christ, or to oppose the doctrines of holiness, or to introduce novel sentiments or "vain jangling" (1 Tim. i. 6.) to draw our people from *the one thing needful*,—CHRIST DYING FOR AND LIVING IN US, an immediate stop must be put to such dangerous, such pernicious proceedings.

Matt. vii. 15, 16. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps' clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Tit. iii. 10, 11. "A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject ;" (here the authority of *judging* and *rejecting* is invested in Timothy) "knowing that he that is such is subverted, and snareth, being condemned of himself." 2 Pet. ii. 1—3. "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you : whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." Rev. ii. 2. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them

which are evil: and *thou* hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them lyars." ii. 20. "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because *thou* [the angel of the church in Thyatira] sufferest that woman, Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols."

Before we conclude our notes on this section, we must entreat our reader to notice, not only here, but throughout the whole of our economy, *the appeals* which are allowed upon all occasions, as far as the nature and circumstances of things will possibly allow of them, without making our economy intricate and burdensome.

## SECTION XX.

*How to provide for the Circuits in the Time of Conference, and to preserve and increase the Work of God.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT can be done to supply the circuits during the sitting of the conference?

*Ans.* 1. Let all the appointments stand according to the plan of the circuit.

2. Engage as many local preachers and exhorters as will supply them; and let them be paid for their time in proportion to the salary of the travelling preachers.

3. If preachers and exhorters cannot attend, let some person of ability be appointed in every society to sing, pray, and read one of Mr. Wesley's sermons.

4. But if that cannot be done, let there be prayer-meetings.

## NOTES.

If the reader compare this section with the third question of the third section of this chapter, and the notes upon it, it will appear that we have taken every step in our power, consistently with the well-being of our conferences, to supply the circuits with the ministry of the word, whilst the conferences are sitting. And, we trust, our people are too well acquainted with the importance of our conferences to the general work, not to be wil-



ling to make some sacrifices on their account. And we have no doubt but every member of our conferences can, with heart-felt affection, address their brethren with whom they are acquainted respectively, in the words of the apostle, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries," Phil. i. 27, 28.

## S E C T I O N XXI.

### *Of the Local Preachers.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT directions shall be given concerning our brethren the local preachers, in respect to their being received as preachers, or admitted into the order of deacons?

*Ans. 1.* No local preacher shall receive a license to preach, till he has been examined and approved at the quarterly meeting of his circuit; which license shall be drawn up in the following words, signed by the president of the meeting, viz. "N. M. has applied to us for liberty to preach as a local preacher in our circuit: and after due inquiry concerning his gifts, grace, and usefulness, we judge he is a proper person to be licensed for this purpose; and we accordingly authorize him to preach."

2. Before any person shall be licensed as a local preacher by a quarterly meeting, he shall bring a recommendation from the society of which he is a member.

3. A local preacher shall be eligible to the office of a deacon, after he has preached for four years from the time he received a regular license, and has obtained the testimonial which is directed in the fourth section of the first chapter of the form of discipline.

*Quest. 2.* Shall any regulations be made in respect to allowing a recompence to local preachers for their work in given cases?

*Ans.* 1. Whenever a local preacher fills the place of a travelling preacher, he shall be paid for his trouble a sum proportionable to the salary of a travelling preacher; which sum shall be paid by the circuit at the next quarterly meeting, if the travelling preacher whose place he filled up, was either sick or necessarily absent; or, in other cases, out of the salary of the travelling preacher himself.

2. If a local preacher be distressed in his temporal circumstances on account of his service in the circuit, he may apply to the quarterly meeting who may give him what relief they judge proper, after the salaries of the travelling preachers, and of their wives, and all other regular allowances to the travelling preachers, be discharged.

*Quest.* 3. What directions shall be given concerning the trial of local preachers, local deacons, or local elders?

*Ans.* If a charge be brought against a local preacher, or local deacon, or elder, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, shall summon three or more local preachers of the neighbourhood, or, for want of local preachers, so many leaders or exhorters. And if they, or the majority of them, on due examination, judge that the local preacher, deacon, or elder aforesaid, has been guilty of such a crime, or has preached such false doctrines, as require his suspension from all public offices in our church, till the ensuing quarterly meeting, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, shall accordingly suspend him from all public offices till the ensuing quarterly meeting.

And in such case, and in every case where a meeting assembled as above described, shall deem the said local preacher, deacon, or elder, culpable, the next quarterly meeting shall proceed upon his trial, and shall have authority to clear, censure, suspend, or expel him according to their judgment. And the presiding elder, or the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, shall at the commencement of the trial, appoint a se-

cretary, who shall take down regular minutes of the evidence and proceedings of the trial, which minutes, when read and approved, shall be signed by the said presiding elder or preacher, and also by the members of the said quarterly meeting, or by the majority of them.

And in case of condemnation, the local preacher, deacon, or elder condemned, shall be allowed an appeal to the next yearly conference, provided that he signify to the said quarterly meeting his determination to appeal; in which case the said presiding elder, or preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, shall lay the minutes of the trial above mentioned, before the said yearly conference, at which the local preacher, deacon or elder, so appealing, may appear: and the said yearly conference shall judge and finally determine from the minutes of the said trial, so laid before them.

## N O T E S.

By this mode of trial we are desirous of showing the most tender regard towards our local brethren.—We are all but men. The best of us may fall into sin, or be drawn into dangerous and pernicious errors; and it is sometimes necessary to stop the plague by an immediate stroke of discipline.—But we would not have so important a character as that of one of our local brethren, even touched to its disadvantage, by only one preacher, who possibly might be younger than the accused. We have, therefore, provided, that a small meeting of respectable persons shall be held, before a single step be taken in the business. The trial will then come before the most weighty assembly in the circuit.

We have directed the yearly conference, upon an appeal, to determine upon the merits of the cause from the memorial of the quarterly meeting, on account of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of bringing the necessary witnesses, perhaps thirty, fifty, or a hundred miles from their home: Nor have we any right or authority to lay such a burden on any of our people. In short, we have done the best we can, according to the nature of the circumstances in which we are placed.

## SECTION XXII.

*Of Baptism.*

1. **L**ET every adult person, and the parents of every child, to be baptized, have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring.

2. We will on no account whatever receive a present for administering baptism, or for burying of the dead.

## NOTES.

1. In respect to the sacrament of baptism, we must refer our reader to our scripture references on the 16th and 17th articles of religion. We need only observe here, that we are conscious that *sprinkling*, *pouring*, and *immersing* have been practised by different churches, in each of which the pure gospel was preached, and the life of God, more or less, experienced; and that all these modes are, more or less, acceptable to God, when administered with sincerity. At the same time, we know well, that as much or more may be said in favour of *sprinkling* than of immersion, from the account given us in Scripture of the baptism of *John himself*: and the primitive churches in general, we believe, favoured the practice of *sprinkling*. However, we would meet the tender mind, and in matters *unessential* condescend as far as we conscientiously can, to the feelings and sentiments of all. Rom. xiv. 1—5. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.—One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. xv. 2, 3. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself." 1 Cor. ix. 22, 23. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." x. 33. "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

2. As we have before observed, our aim is to save souls, and not to enrich ourselves: therefore, Mr. Wesley and our general

conference placed *our whole economy* as far distant as possible from that of a lucrative ministry. We are determined not to sell the ordinances of God: in this no man shall make our glorying void. Matt. x. 8. "Freely ye have received," says our Lord, "freely give." 1 Cor. ix. 11—18. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless, *we have not used this power*; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.—I have used *none of these things*; neither have I written these things that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die than that any man should make my glorying void.—What is my reward then? Verily, that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel." 2 Cor. xi. 7. "Have I committed an offence, in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God *freely*?" 1 Pet. v. 2. "Feed the flock of God which is among you,—not for filthy lucre, but of a *ready mind*." 3 John 7. "For his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the gentiles."

## SECTION XXIII.

### *Of the Lords's Supper.*

*Quest.* **A**RE there any directions to be given concerning the administration of the Lord's supper?

*Answ.* 1. Let those who have scruples concerning the receiving of it kneeling, be permitted to receive it either standing or sitting.

2. Let no person that is not a member of our society, be admitted to the communion, without examination, and some token given by an elder or deacon.

3. No person shall be admitted to the Lord's supper among us, who is guilty of any practice for which we would exclude a member of our society.

## N O T E S.

Our readers must here be referred to the scripture-references on the 16th, 18th, and 19th articles of religion, and our observations on the preceding section. As the Scripture is silent

about the posture of the communicants, we prefer *the most humble*, whatever our Saviour might have permitted when he instituted the sacred ordinance. Besides, as we always receive the elements *in prayer*, we for that reason also prefer the kneeling posture. We must also observe, that our elders should be very cautious how they admit to the communion persons who are not in our society. It would be highly injurious to *our brethren*, if we suffered any to partake of the Lord's supper with them, whom we would not readily admit into our society on application made to us. Those whom we judge unfit to partake of our profitable, *prudential* means of grace, we should most certainly think improper to be partakers of an ordinance which has been expressly instituted by Christ himself.

1 Cor. v. 11. "Now I have written unto you *not to keep company*, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; *with such an one, no, not to eat.*" 2 Thess. iii. 6—15. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us; for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you.—For we hear that there are some which walk among you *disorderly*, working not at all, but are busy-bodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, *note that man, and have no company with him*, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." 1 Tim. iv. 8. "*Bodily exercise* profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

## SECTION XXIV.

### *Of Public Worship.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT directions shall be given for the establishment of uniformity in public worship amongst us, on the Lord's-day.

*Ans.* 1. Let the morning-service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of a chapter out of the Old Testament, and another out of the New, and preaching.

2. Let the afternoon-service consist of singing, prayer, the reading of one chapter out of the bible, and preaching.

3. Let the evening-service consist of singing, prayer, and preaching.

4. But on the days of administering the Lord's supper, the two chapters in the morning-service may be omitted.

5. Let the society be met, wherever it is practicable, on the sabbath-day.

## N O T E S.

This section needs little more than some pointed texts of sacred writ for its confirmation to all christian persons. Our church insists on the reading of the Scriptures in the congregation, and gives directions accordingly. This is of the utmost consequence, and we trust will be most sacredly observed by all our ministers and preachers. A peculiar blessing accompanies the public reading as well as preaching the word of God to attentive, believing souls. And in these days of infidelity, nothing should be omitted, which may lead the people to the love of the holy bible.

The meeting of the society also, wherever practicable, is of considerable moment. There are various weighty subjects, peculiarly suitable to religious societies, which cannot be so well enlarged upon to a mixed congregation. Brotherly union and fellowship, christian discipline in all its branches, and various other particulars may be enlarged upon and enforced with great propriety and success on such occasions. At these times also we may enter more minutely into the different parts of the relative duties, than we can to unawakened souls, whose whole life is sin, and who are at the best only "like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleannesses."

(1) *Exod. xx. 24.* In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. *Isai. lx. 13.* And I will make the place of my feet glorious. *Mal. i. 11.* For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering. *Psalms xxii. 25.* My praise shall be of thee *in the great congregation*: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. *xxxv. 18.* I will give thee thanks *in the great congregation*: I will praise thee among

*much people.* xl. 9. *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation.* lxxviii. 26. *Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.* Matt. xviii. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Luke iv. 16, 17. *He [Christ] came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up FOR TO READ. . . And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias.* Acts xiii. 14—16. *When they departed from Perga they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and sat down. And, after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, &c.* Ver. 27. *They knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath-day.* 1 Cor. xi. 20. *When ye come together—into one place, &c.* See also the 14th chapter on public prayer, thanksgiving, and prophecy or preaching. Col. iv. 16. *When this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans.* 1 Thess. v. 27. *I charge you, by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.* Rev. i. 3. *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.*

(2) Acts xi. 26. *It came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, &c.* xiv. 27. *When they were come, and had gathered the church together, &c.*

## SECTION XXV.

### *Of the Spirit and Truth of Singing.*

*Quest.* **H**OW shall we guard against formality in singing?

*Ans.* 1. By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation?

2. By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six verses.

3. By suiting the tune to the words.

4. By often stopping short, and asking the people, "Now! Do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?"



5. Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality ; and is brought in by those who have either very strong or very weak voices.

6. In every large society let them learn to sing ; and let them always learn our tunes first.

7. Let the women constantly sing their parts alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass as it is composed in the tune-book.

8. Introduce no new tune till they are perfect in the old.

9. Recommend our tune-book. And if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two at each place to pitch the tune for you.

10. Exhort every person in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only.

11. Sing no hymns of your own composing.

12. If a preacher be present, let him alone give out the words.

13. When the singers would teach a tune to the congregation, they must sing only the tenor.

14. The preachers are desired not to encourage the singing of fuge-tunes in our congregations.

15. Let it be recommended to our people, not to attend the singing-schools which are not under our direction.

*N. B.* We do not think that fuge-tunes are sinful, or improper to be used in private companies : but we do not approve of their being used in our public congregations, because public singing is a part of divine worship in which all the congregation ought to join.

## N O T E S.

The singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in the congregation, has been allowed by all the churches of God in all ages (one modern society excepted) to be a part of divine worship ; and, *from its very nature*, it evidently belongs to the *whole* congregation. It would be unseemly for the minister *alone* to sing : but if this be the duty of *one* member of the congregation,

it must be the duty of all who have voices for singing; and there are very few who may not join in the *tenor* part, all the defects of their voices being swallowed up in the general sound. Few things can be more pleasing to the Lord, than a congregation, with one heart and one voice, praising his holy name. It is indeed to be feared, that there is seldom a large congregation, where *every* individual is *sincere*. However, all who do in sincerity desire a blessing, should strive to join in the general chorus—we mean, in every part of the hymn. If one part of it be above the experience of the singer, he should adjoin a silent prayer, that the Lord may give him the grace he needs; for the Lord listens to hear what the heart speaks, and takes all as nothing, if the heart be silent. Again, when his experience rises above the hymn, his secret prayer should be in behalf of that part of the congregation which it suits: but in the *proper* hymns of praise he may throw off all reserve, for we are *all* infinitely indebted to our good God. From these remarks we surely must be sensible of the necessity of confining ourselves to *simple* tunes, as the *fuge-tunes* have an unavoidable tendency to confine to a *few* this part of divine worship, which belongs to the whole. And those, we think, have made few remarks on public worship, who have not observed, on the one hand, how naturally the *fuge-tunes* puff up with vanity those who excel in them; and on the other hand, how it deadens devotion, and only at the best raises an admiration of the fingers, and not of Christ.

When it is recommended in this section to the preacher sometimes to stop and address the people in the course of singing, the *substance* only of what he should say is mentioned there. It is not intended, that he should speak *abruptly* on such occasions, but with softness and due respect on the necessity of singing and of performing every act of devotion from the heart.

1 Chron. xvi. 7—9. On that day David delivered first this psalm, to thank the Lord, *into the band of Asaph and his brethren*. Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds *among the people*. Sing unto him, *sing psalms* unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works. Psalm xcvi. 1, 2. O come, let *us* sing unto the Lord; let *us* make a *joyful noise* to the rock of our salvation. Let *us* come *before his presence* with thanksgiving, and make a *joyful noise* unto him with psalms. xcvi. 1. O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord *all the earth*. civ. 33. I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise unto my God while I have my being. Psalm cxxxviii. 1. I will praise thee with my whole heart; *before the gods* will I sing praise unto thee. Matt. xxvi. 30. When they [Christ and his disciples] *had sung an hymn*, they went out into the mount of Olives. See also Mark xiv. 26. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. I will sing with the Spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

**Ephes. v. 18, 19.** Be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. **Col. iii. 16.** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing ONE ANOTHER in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, with grace in your hearts, to the Lord. **Jam. v. 13.** Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry [joyful]? let him sing psalms.

## S E C T I O N XXVI.

*Of the Method of raising a Fund for the Superannuated Preachers, and the Widows and Orphans of Preachers.*

**Quest.** **H**OW can we provide for superannuated preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers?

**Ans.** 1. Let every preacher, when first admitted into full connection, pay two dollars and two thirds, at the yearly conference.

2. Let every other preacher in full connection, contribute two dollars every year; except the conference dispense with the payment in cases of distress: in which instances the preachers so indulged, shall be entitled to all the privileges of the fund, in the same manner as if they had paid their subscription.

3. Out of this fund, let provision be made, first, for the worn-out preachers, and then for the widows and children of those who are dead.

4. Every worn-out preacher shall receive, if he need it, not usually more than sixty-four dollars annually.

5. Every widow of a preacher shall receive annually, if she need it, during her widow-hood, fifty-three dollars and one third.

6. Every orphan of a preacher shall receive once for all, if needed, fifty-three dollars and one third.

7. But no one shall be entitled to any thing from this fund, till he has paid six dollars and two thirds.

8. Nor any who neglects to pay his subscription and arrears for three years together, unless he be employed on foreign missions, or has received a dispensation as above mentioned.

9. Let every preacher who has the care of a circuit, bring to the conference, as far as possible, the contribution of every preacher left behind in his circuit.

10. Every person who desires support from the fund shall first make his case known to the yearly conference, which shall determine how far he is a proper subject of relief.

11. The president of the yearly conference shall give an order on the general steward of the fund or any of his agents, for any sum of money allowed by the conference, agreeably to these rules.

12. The receipts and disbursements of the fund shall be printed annually in the minutes of the conference.

13. The presiding elder of each district shall keep a regular account of all the concerns of the fund, as far as they relate to his district, in a proper book which he shall hand down to his successor.

14. Each member of the fund shall from time to time receive a certificate from his yearly conference for the payment of his subscription.

15. This fund shall be reserved for extraordinary cases, which the chartered fund may not reach. And no travelling preacher shall have a vote in the disposal of the travelling preachers' annual subscription, unless he be himself an annual subscriber.

16. The fund shall never be reduced to less than six hundred dollars.

## N O T E S.

This institution is not to be considered as a charity, but as an agreement among brethren for their mutual support when old or worn-out in the work of the ministry ; and also for the support of their surviving widows and orphans. The chartered fund

allows no more than sixty-four dollars a year to an unmarried, superannuated, or worn-out preacher, which is far from being sufficient to supply him with the necessaries of life, if he have nothing of his own. The same may be observed concerning all the other objects of this institution. *This* fund, therefore, is intended to supply the defects of the *chartered* fund, in respect to those who have so richly and specially served the connection with their strength and lives. And as it is supported *only* by the subscriptions of the preachers out of their little annual pittance, no one has any right or ground to object to it.

John xiii. 34, 35. A new commandment *I* give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. xv. 12. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Ver. 17. These things *I* command you, that ye love one another. Rom. xii. 10. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love. Gal. v. 13. By love serve one another. 1 Thess. iv. 9. But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Heb. xiii. 1. Let brotherly love continue. 1 Pet. i. 22. See that ye love one another, with a pure heart, fervently. iii. 8. Love as brethren. 1 John iii. 1. This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. iv. 7. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God. Ver. 11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. See also 2 Kings iv. 1—7. concerning the miracle wrought by Elisha, for the relief of a widow of one of the sons of the prophets.

## SECTION XXVII.

### *Of raising a general Fund for the Propagation of the Gospel.*

*Quest.* **H**OW may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?

*Answer.* By a yearly collection, and if need be, a quarterly one, to be raised by every one who has the charge of a circuit, in every principal congregation in his circuit. To this end, he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints:

“ How shall we send labourers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? Many are willing to hear, but not to bear the expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: Stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us in the mean time to supply their lack of service? To raise a general fund, out of which from time to time, that expence may be defrayed? By this means those who willingly offer themselves, may travel through every part, whether there be societies or not, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite to promote this glorious work?

“ Beside this, in carrying on so large a work through the continent, there are calls for money in various ways and we must frequently be at considerable expence, or the work must be at a full stop. Many too are the *occasional* distresses of our preachers, or their families, which require an immediate supply.—Otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

“ The money contributed will be brought to the ensuing conference.

“ Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like this since you first heard the gospel sound? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are pressed above measure. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Help to send forth able, willing labourers into your Lord's harvest: So shall ye be assistant in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to propagate the gospel of your salvation to the remotest corners of the earth, till the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land as the waters cover the sea. So shall it appear to ourselves and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one spirit; so shall the baptized heathens be yet again constrained to say, “ See how these christians love one another?”

## N O T E S.

The address to the people given in this section is itself both an explanation and application of the whole subject. The following scriptures also will serve to illustrate the subject :

Luke viii. 1—3. He [Christ] went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God ; and the twelve were with him, and certain women,—Mary, called Magdalene,—and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, *which ministered unto him of their substance.* 1 Cor. ix. 9. It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. 2 Tim. i. 16—18. The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus ; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. But when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day : and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus thou knowest very well. See also the scripture-references in the notes on the 9th section of this chapter.

## S E C T I O N XXVIII.

*Of the Chartered Fund.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT further provision, shall be made for the distressed travelling preachers, for the families of travelling preachers, and for superannuated and worn-out preachers, and the widows and orphans of preachers ?

*Ans.* There shall be a chartered fund, to be supported by the voluntary contributions of our friends ; the principal stock of which shall be funded under the direction of trustees, and the interest applied under the direction of the general conference, according to the following regulations, viz.

1. THAT no sum exceeding sixty-four dollars, shall in any one year be applied to the use of an itinerant, superannuated, or worn-out *single* preacher.

2. That no sum exceeding one hundred and twenty-eight dollars in any one year, shall be applied to the

## C H A P. II.



## S E C T I O N I.

*The Nature, Design, and general Rules of the United Societies.*

1. **I**N the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thence forward they did every week, namely on *Thursday* in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily) he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them; and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY, first in *Europe* and then in *America*. Such a society is no other than “*a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.*”

3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are but twelve persons in every class; one of whom is stiled *The Leader*.—It is his duty,



I. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order,

1. To enquire how their souls prosper ;
2. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require ;
3. To receive what they are willing to give, towards the relief of the preachers, church and poor.\*

II. To meet the minister and the stewards of the society once a week ; in order,

1. To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reprov'd.
2. To pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.
3. There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, *a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.* But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind: especially that which is most generally practised: Such as

The taking the name of God in vain :

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling.

Drunkenness: or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of necessity :

*The buying or selling of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them :*

*Fighting, quarrelling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil; or railing for railing: the using many words in buying or selling :*

*The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty :*

The giving or taking things on usury, i. e. unlawful interest :

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\* This part refers wholly to towns and cities, where the poor are generally numerous, and church-expences considerable.

*Uncharitable or unprofitable* conversation : particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers :

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us :

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God :  
As

The *putting on of gold and costly apparel* :

The *taking such diversions* as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus :

The *singing those songs, or reading those books*, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God :

Softness and needless self-indulgence :

Laying up treasure upon earth :

Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

4. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men :

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with ; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that " we are not to do good, unless *our hearts be free to it.*"

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be ; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business : and so much the more, because the world will love its own and them *only*.

By all possible *diligence* and *frugality*, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race which is set before them, *denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily* : submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the

filth and off-scouring of the world ; and looking that men should *say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.*

5. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, By attending upon all the ordinances of God : Such are

The public worship of God :

The ministry of the word, either read or expounded ;

The supper of the Lord ;

Family and private prayer ;

Searching the scriptures ; and

Fasting or abstinence.

6. These are the general rules of our societies : all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on truly awakened hearts. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul, as they who must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season.—But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

## N O T E S.

The present section forms, perhaps, one of the completest systems of christian ethics or morals, for its size, which ever was published by an uninspired writer. We speak this the more readily, because it was the work of the first divine, we believe, since the time of the apostles, the late Mr. Wesley, after matured experience, with only a small addition, which the circumstances of these states required. The rules are so clear, and so obviously approve themselves to every candid mind, that we need only touch briefly upon them, proving them by quotations from the sacred writings.

1. Of class-meeting we shall speak hereafter : We would here only explain a few particulars concerning the office of a leader.

We have found it necessary in innumerable instances to enlarge the number of the class, from the impossibility of providing a sufficiency of class-leaders, if the number were always limited to *twelve*. The office is of vast consequence. The revival of the work of God does perhaps depend as much upon *the whole body of leaders*, as it does upon *the whole body of preachers*. We have almost constantly observed, that when a leader is dull or careless or inactive—when he has not abilities or zeal sufficient to reprove with courage though with gentleness, and to press a present salvation upon the hearts of the sincere, the class is, in general, languid: but, on the contrary, when the leader is much alive to God and faithful in his office, the class is also, in general, lively and spiritual. This arises from the nature of the christian plan of salvation. It is the same, in general, with a minister and his flock; and every leader, as we have before intimated, is, *in some degree*, a gospel minister: though we may add, that among us a spiritual body of leaders may counteract the otherwise pernicious consequences of a languid ministry.

At the beginning of Methodism, the leader called weekly upon each of his class, in which case twelve were quite sufficient for his inspection. But very soon it was found abundantly preferable for the whole class to meet the leader *together*, not only for the sake of the leader, but for the good of the people, who, by that means, enjoy the unspeakable advantages of christian fellowship. At the same time the leader is expected to visit the members of his class at their own houses, especially when they are sick or confined, as often as his circumstances will admit.

Numb. xi. 14—17. "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness. And the Lord said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." Ver. 24, 25. "And Moses went out, and told the people the words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people, and set them round about the tabernacle: and the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that when the Spirit rested upon them, they *prophefied*, and did not cease." Exod. xii. 18. "Moreover, thou shalt provide, out of all the people, able men, *such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetous-*

*apostles*; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." [It is, we think, evident from the context, that these men were appointed not only to determine on civil questions, but in respect to every difficulty relating to the ceremonial law, and "all the statutes of God, and his laws," ver. 16. in short, to act in every thing in the place of Moses, except in matters of great moment.] 1 Cor. xii. 28. God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, *teachers*; after that miracles; then gifts of healing, *helps*, governments, diversities of tongues." See the whole chapter. Ephes. iv. 11. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, *pastors and teachers*."

2d. *The desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins*, is expressed as the *single* condition of being admitted into our society, because these two are inseparably united. There never was a soul which truly desired to flee from the wrath of God, but at the same time desired real salvation. They both come from God: and his Spirit never gives the sacred wish to avoid the one, but he bestows an equally ardent desire to obtain the other. The nature of God and the whole plan of salvation by Jesus Christ require this. The creation and redemption of man, and all the operations of the Divine Spirit, have no other end but the making us like to God, and preparing us for his service, and for the eternal enjoyment of himself. Matt. xi. 28. "Come unto me," says Christ, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Luke xviii. 13, 14. "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner. I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other."

3d. The soul which sees its danger, and longs for salvation, will not intentionally offend the God it fears—the God it desires to love. At least, if it have not power over inward sin, it will abhor the vices and criminal amusements of the world. All its former pleasures are embittered to it. It now seeks a happiness which the world cannot afford it, and, therefore, loaths every thing which tends to keep it from the object of its wishes. Matt. iii. 8. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." See also Luke xiii. 8. 2 Cor. 7, 10. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to *salvation* not to be repented of."

1. The taking of God's name in vain is so gross a vice, that those must be wholly given up to Satan, who will commit it. Exod. xx. 7. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God *in vain*; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh

his name in vain." See also Deut. v. 11. Lev. xix. 12. "Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God." See also the scripture-references taken from the New Testament in the notes on the 25th article of religion.

2. Sabbath-breaking is a vice which may be committed under various specious pretences, though it is the forerunner of all evil. In this day especially it is a vice inexcusable in those who make the least profession of christianity; when the entire rejection of the sabbath is looked upon by the enemies of revealed religion, in general, as the most effectual means to destroy christianity itself. O let us all come out to the help of the Lord against the mighty (Judges v. 23.) and love the sabbath for the sake of its Divine Founder and the inestimable blessings flowing from the due observance of it. It has been already honoured by the divine rest from creation, and is an emblem of that spiritual and eternal rest which remains for the people of God. (Heb. iv. 9.) See particularly the numerous scripture-references in the notes on the 15th section of the first chapter, as also the references on the 23d section.

3. The sin of drunkenness should be particularly guarded against in a country where the materials for distilled liquors so much abound. Sensuality, alas! of every kind, but particularly that which arises from intemperance in the use of distilled liquors, soils and defiles the soul, fills it full of impure desires, and turns the human nature, capable of the image of God, into a loathsome beast. Luke xxi. 34, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Rom. xiii. 13. "Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness." 1 Cor. v. 1. "—A drunkard—with such an one no not to eat." vi. 10. "—Nor drunkards—shall inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. v. 19—21. "Now, the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these:—drunkenness, &c. Ephes. v. 18. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."—1 Thess. v. 7. "They that be drunken, are drunken in the night." Tit. ii. 1—3. "Speak thou,—that the aged women [be] not given to much wine."

4. The buying and selling the souls and bodies of men (for what is the body without the soul but a dead carcase) is a complicated crime.\* It was indeed, in some measure, overlooked in

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\* Are there not many proprietors to be found on this continent, who restrain their slaves from enjoying the privileges of the gospel, and thereby invade the rights of the souls and consciences of their slaves, as well as their bodies? At the same time we must give the credit due to multitudes who do not thus enslave the minds of their servants, but allow them full liberty to attend the preaching of the gospel, wherever they think they are most profited,

the Jews by reason of the wonderful hardness of their hearts, as was the keeping of concubines and the divorcing of wives at pleasure, but it is totally opposite to the whole spirit of the gospel. It has an immediate tendency to fill the mind with pride and tyranny, and is frequently productive of almost every act of lust and cruelty which can disgrace the human species. Even the moral philosopher will candidly confess, that if there be a God, every perfection he possesses must be opposed to a practice so contrary to every moral idea which can influence the human mind. Nehem. v. 8, 9. "I said unto them, We, after our ability, have redeemed our brethren, the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us?" Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God, because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?" Isai. lviii. 6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke." Ezek. xxvii. 13, (This chapter is written on the destruction of Tyrus, and the causes of it) "Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants:—they traded the persons of men." Acts xvii. 24—26. "God—hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-slayers,——for men-sealers," &c. Rev. xiii. 10. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity." Rev. xviii. (On the fall of Babylon, and the causes of it) ver. 11—13. "No man buyeth their merchandise any more: the merchandise of gold, and silver,——and slaves, and souls of men."

5. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," Gal. v. 22, 23. These are directly opposite to fighting, quarrelling, brawling, litigiousness, revenge, and railing. It is, therefore, impossible for the holy Spirit of God to dwell in a heart which is a cage of such unclean birds—to have any connection with a soul, which indulges those tempers which are so contrary to his own holy nature. Those, therefore, who manifest such dispositions cannot be even under the convictions of the Spirit of God, and are, of consequence, unfit for any christian society. Col. iii. 12, 13. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Tit. iii. 1, 2. "Put them in mind—to be no

drawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." Jam. iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?" See also the notes on section 10. chapter 1. concerning going to law with each other.

We also conceive it scarcely possible to use many words in buying and selling, without being frequently guilty of lying, and no liar can inherit the kingdom of God. John viii. 44. "When he [the devil] speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." Ephes. iv. 25. "Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour." Col. iii. 9. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." Rev. xxi. 8. "—All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." xxii. 15. "Without are dogs, &c. and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

6. We are debtors to the constitution under which we live (*we, especially in these United States*) for all the blessings of law and liberty which we enjoy: and without a government to support that constitution, all would be anarchy and confusion. It is, therefore, our duty to support it by bearing, with our fellow-citizens, an equal proportion of its expences; and it is as great a crime to rob our country, as to rob a private individual; and the blindness of too many to this truth injures not, in the least, the veracity of it. See the scripture-references on the 23d article of religion, and those also on the 15th section of the first chapter, 5th article.

7. Usury has been condemned in all civilized nations of the world. It is the offspring of covetousness arrived to its height. It is a vice which belongs only to the basest of the human race, and the mind which is under its government is in danger of being led on, by degrees, to the highest excess. Exod. xxii. 25. "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury." See also Lev. xxv. 35—37. Jer. xv. 10. "I have neither lent on usury, nor men have lent to me on usury." Ezek. xviii. 5—9. "If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right,—he that hath not given forth upon usury, &c. he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God." Jam. v. 1—3. "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days."

8. If "our conversation is to be alway with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. iv. 6.) how opposite to this is the slandering our



neighbours, or speaking evil of any. We are not in our conversation to speak *evil* of another, however true it may be: nothing can justify it, but the cautioning of a friend from some *immediate* danger. It will, in every other case, be condemned on the day of judgment, not merely as an idle but as a criminal word. If this be the case, it is still more criminal to speak evil of public characters. It is taking the most unjust advantage of them: and we may, perhaps, without intention, ruin the characters and usefulness of much better men than ourselves. This is a vice which we should particularly guard against, because the temptations to it are so frequent and various; and so many *professors* (we can scarcely say *possessors*) are guilty of it. Follow always the rule of good bishop Beveridge, "Speak of men's vices *only* to their faces, and of their virtues *only* behind their backs." Acts xxiii. 25. "It is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." See the scripture references in the notes on the 23d article of religion, and chap. 1. sect. 15.

9. To do to others as we would wish they should do to us (See Matt. vii. 12, and Luke vi. 21) includes in it the whole of our duty to our neighbour—even the disinterested love of man, which can flow alone *from the love of God*. It is natural for the men of the world to imagine that all mankind are influenced by private motives, because they know nothing of the love God, and esteem the professors of grace as enthusiasts. It is the love of God alone which can raise the soul above every thing on earth, and crucify it entirely to the world, and, consequently, to every object which could interest it here below. *It is only this* which can enable us to act to others continually according to that golden rule, on which hang all the law and the prophets. See 1 Cor. xiii.

10. To do all to the glory of God, is the spring of all religion. Every thing is sinful which proceeds from any other principle: but every thing is an acceptable sacrifice to God, through Christ, which proceeds from this heavenly motive—the glory of God. He, who thus acts, has found out the philosopher's stone, the art of turning every thing into the true gold of the sanctuary. He is blessed in his basket and store, in his going out and coming in, and in his lying down and rising up. But the very reverse is the case with all who act from any other principle, however specious their outward conduct may be. *Without this*, every thing is carnal or devilish, sinful and accursed. 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

The man who acts from this heavenly principle,

(1.) Cannot wear any apparel which tends to feed his own pride, or to prevent his liberality to the poor. See the 7th section of this chapter.

(2.) He cannot indulge himself in the carnal diversions of the world. What blasphemy would it be for men or women, when they were throwing themselves about in a dance, to cry "I do this in the name of the holy Jesus!" What insolence would it be for the card-player, when he is tossing about his cards, or the horse-racer when he is driving furiously, to say, "I do this to the glory of God!" These diversions have been pronounced *by the spiritual ministers of Christ*, of all denominations in all ages, as inconsistent with true religion: and we shall find on the day of judgment, that *they* were better acquainted with the mind of God in these respects, than the children of Satan. 1 Tim. v. 6. "She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth." 2 Tim. iii. 1—4. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." Job xxi. 7—11. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power:—they send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

(3.) He sings and reads for the glory of God—for the sole purposes of gaining clearer light in the truths of God, inflaming his heart with more of the love of God, and promoting the temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests of his fellow-creatures. Psal. cxix. 54. "Thy statutes have been *my songs* in the house of my pilgrimage." Ver. 99. "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are *my meditation*." Ver. 148. "Mine eyes prevent the night watches, *that I might meditate on thy word*."

(4.) He is well aware, how all that is carnal draws him from God. He therefore daily takes up his cross. He feels a delight (though perhaps mixed with some natural resistance) to restrain and oppose his fleshly affections. He keeps at a distance from self-indulgence, and draws not too near to the brink of the precipice. He feels his own weakness: and though he lives by faith upon the Son of God, yet he would not *presume* upon him. Matt. x. 38. "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." xvi. 24. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Mark viii. 34. "And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." x. 21. "Come, take up the cross, and follow me." Luke ix. 23. "And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." xiv. 27. "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."

(5.) He is a faithful steward of the manifold blessings of his God. He provides for his family with *christian* wisdom and *christian* prudence; and all the rest he lays out for the relief of the poor and afflicted, and for the advancement of the kingdom of God upon earth. He does not wish to have his good things in this world, and afterwards in hell to lift up his eyes in torments: but his highest ambition is to enjoy the sovereign good, the God of his salvation, to the utmost capacity of his renewed nature and to all eternity. Matt. vi. 19—21. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

(6.) He is strictly honest. He abhors the iniquitous attempt of getting money at his neighbour's risk. But alas! this is too common a practice even among many who call themselves professors. A man is poor, and wishes to be rich; or he is rich, and wishes to be richer; he accordingly takes up a great quantity of goods to form a large but false capital; or he borrows money of his friends for the same purpose: if he succeed, he has his ambition gratified, and becomes a man of fortune; if he fail, he is only where he was before, or at least suffers but little; whilst those who have in confidence sold him goods, or advanced to him money, are the only or chief sufferers. He is, what he would call tolerably safe at all events. This is an unjust, an iniquitous practice: and the more so, because the whole is carried on under the mask of honour and honesty, of friendship or integrity. Such persons should have no admission among us; or, if they have, should, when discovered, be expelled as some of the greatest enemies of civil society; whose practice has an immediate tendency to break all the bonds of social union, and to destroy all confidence among men. Mark x. 18, 19. "Jesus said unto him, Defraud not." 1 Cor. vi. 8. "Nay, ye do wrong and defraud, and that your brethren." Isa. xxi. 2. "A grievous vision is declared unto me; The treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth" xxxiii. 1. "Woe to thee that dealeth treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee;—when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee." See also the scripture references, in the notes on sect. 15th. chap. 1.

4th. True conviction of sin and an earnest longing for salvation will also be accompanied with every outward fruit of righteousness. The love of God may not yet have become the governing principle of the whole soul, so as to make obedience flow as from a second nature; but yet the *contrite* soul will have a constant fear of offending God, and this will be accompanied with a constant desire of pleasing him. Dan. iv. 27. "Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor," Matt. iii. 8. "Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance," See also Luke iii. 8. Acts xxvi. 19, 20. "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but shewed—that they should repent and turn to God, *and do works meet for repentance.*"

1. This principle will make us feel for the infirmities of others, and sympathize with them. We shall delight to afford to the hungry and naked, the stranger, the sick and imprisoned, the necessities or comforts they stand in need of. And in all this, we shall consider the poor as the representatives of Jesus Christ, and that in doing it to *them* we do it to *him*. See Matt. xxv. 31—46.

2. It is a perfect mistake to suppose, that a real penitent cannot or is not called to do good *to the souls of others*. Many in their awakened state have done considerable good in this respect. But when the love of God is become the reigning principle of the soul, we hunger and thirst for the salvation of others. Our cry is, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," Psal. lxvi. 16.

3. Though he does good to all according to his ability, yet he particularly feels for the members of Christ's mystical body. *They* are to him as his own soul. With them he experiences an union which the world is utterly unacquainted with. They are like the members of his own family: they are bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. "As we have, therefore, opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them *who are of the household of faith*," Gal. vi. 10. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," 1 John iii. 14.

4. It is frequently one of the devices of Satan, to tempt the children of God to be negligent in their business, under the pretext that they will be able to live more in heaven by having nothing to do with earthly things. But the believer, when called to labour in a profession or trade for the support of his family, or to fill up some useful station in society, may so intermix pious ejaculations with his studies or labours, and improve so many short intervals in private prayer, as not only to preserve his grace, but to increase daily in the divine life. Ejaculations are swift messengers, which soon enter heaven, and soon bring down a gracious answer. Rom. xii. 11. "*Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.*" Ver. 17. "Provide things

honest in the sight of all men." 1 Tim. v. 8. "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

5. We have already enlarged on the great duty of taking up our cross, and therefore shall only observe, that if we will be real disciples of our crucified Lord, we must expect to meet with contempt and persecution from the carnal world. Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." John xv. 18—21. "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do unto you *for my name's sake*, because they know not him that sent me." O what *christian* would refuse to suffer *for the sake of his Redeemer*. Matt. v. 10—12. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you; and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

5th. We have also spoken largely on all the ordinances of the gospel, and the necessity of being constant partakers of them; and have proved this by a great variety of scriptures. Although the ordinances are but *means* of grace, their end, which is the salvation of our souls, cannot be attained without them. Such is the order of God, except when unavoidable hindrances prevent our attending of them; in which case, God will himself be to the sincere soul instead of all ordinances, yea, will turn *the very hindrances themselves* into the most profitable of all means.

6th. Thus have we briefly explained *the regulations* by which the members of our society are governed. When these rules were once in a particular suit at law read in a full court of justice, in Europe, "I wish," said the judge, lifting up his hands, "that all the world kept them." O what a happy world would it become, *if they were written by the Spirit of God on every heart*. Surely "the Lord God would then dwell among us," (Psal. lxxviii. 18.) yea, his delight would be among the children of men. "The wolf would then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with the kid," (Isa. xi. 6.) "They would not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain: for the earth would be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," (ver. 9.)

## SECTION II.

*Of Class-Meeting.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW may the leaders of classes be rendered more useful?

*Ans.* 1. Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness, at least once a quarter. In order to this, take sufficient time.

2. Let each leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers: Not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

3. Let the leaders converse with those who have the charge of their circuits, frequently and freely.

*Quest.* 2 Can any thing more be done in order to make the class-meetings lively and profitable?

*Ans.* 1. Change improper leaders.

2. Let the leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

3. Let us observe which leaders are the most useful: And let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

4. See that all the leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

*Quest.* 3. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the society?

*Ans.* 1. Give tickets to none until they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least six months on trial.

2. Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or until they have met three or four times in a class.

3. Read the rules to them the first time they meet.

*Quest.* 4. How shall we be more exact in receiving and excluding members?

*Ans.* The official minister or preacher shall, at every quarterly meeting, read the names of those that are received and excluded.

*Quest.* 5. What shall we do with those members of society, who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?

*Ans.* 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz. Exclusion.

2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit exclude them in the society; shewing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline and not for immoral conduct.

## N O T E S.

1. So much has been already spoken concerning the office of a leader in the notes on the preceding section and on the 10th of the 1st chapter, that we have hardly room to enlarge without tautology. But from the whole we may observe, how careful our ministers should be in their choice of leaders. For our leaders under God are the sinews of our society, and our revivals will ever, in a great measure, rise or fall with them. Our ministers and preachers should therefore consider no time better employed than that which they bestow on the leaders, in examining them, directing them, and stirring them up to their holy and momentous duty.

2. We have made many remarks in the course of our work on the necessity of christian fellowship: but this cannot be carried on to any considerable advantage without stated solemn times of assembling. The meetings held for this purpose must have a name to distinguish them. We call ours *Class-meetings*, and *Band-meetings*; but of the former we are to speak at present. Here we must notice, that it is *the thing itself, christian fellowship* and not the name, which we contend for. The experience of about sixty-years has fully convinced us of its necessity; and we ourselves can say that in the course of an extensive acquaintance with men and things, and the church of God, for about twenty or thirty years we have rarely met with one who has been much devoted to God, and at the same time not united in close christian fellowship to some religious society or other. Far be it from us to suppose that no fellowship-meetings, except ours, are owned of God: so illiberal a sentiment never entered our minds. But we must say, that those who entirely neglect this *divinely instituted* ordinance (however various the names given to it, or the modes of conducting it, may be) manifest, that they are either ashamed to acknowledge *as their brethren*, the true children of God, or "are enemies of the cross

11. Is it your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak without disguise, and without reserve?

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion requires: The four following at every meeting.

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?

2. What particular temptations have you met with?

3. How were you delivered?

4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

*Directions given to the Band-Societies.  
December 25th, 1744.*

**Y**OU are supposed to have the *Faith that overcometh the world*. To you therefore it is not grievous,

I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil: in particular,

1. Neither to *buy* nor *sell* any thing at all on the Lord's-day.

2. To taste no spirituous liquor, *no dram* of any kind, unless prescribed by a physician.

3. To be *at a word* both in buying and selling.

4. Not to *mention the fault* of any *behind his back*, and to stop those short that do.

5. To wear no *needle's ornaments*, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

6. To use no *needle's self-indulgence*.

II. Zealously to maintain good works; in particular,

1. To *give alms* of such things as you possess, and that according to your ability.

2. To *reprove* those who sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness of wisdom.

3. To be patterns of *diligence* and *frugality*, of *self-denial*, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; in particular,



1. To be at church, and at the LORD's table, and at every public meeting of the bands, at every opportunity.

2. To use private prayer every day; and family prayer, if you are the head of a family.

3. Frequently to read the scriptures, and meditate thereon. And,

4. To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year.

## N O T E S.

Our society may be considered as a spiritual hospital, where souls come to be cured of their spiritual diseases. The members therefore who compose our class meetings vary exceedingly in the state of their minds and the degrees of their experience. On this account it was thought necessary by our venerable leader Mr. Wesley, to establish a society of evangelical believers within the society composed of the whole body of Methodists, to which he gave the name of *the band-society*. This institution he borrowed from the practice of the primitive churches, as indeed he did almost every thing he established.

The heart of man *by nature* is such a cage of unclean birds, that few are to be found who will lay before their brethren all its secret movements, unless the love of God be the ruling principle of their souls. And even then they are not called upon to exercise this confidence, except towards a small confidential company of true believers like themselves. When bands can be formed on this plan (and on no other do we form them) they become one of the most profitable means of grace in the whole compass of christian discipline. There is nothing we know of, which so much quickens the soul to a desire and expectation of the perfect love of God as this. It includes in it all the spiritual benefits of social intercourse. For these little families of love, not only mutually weep and rejoice, and in every thing sympathize with each other, as genuine friends, but each of them possesses a measure, of "that unction of the Holy One," (1 John ii. 20.) which teaches all spiritual knowledge. And thus are they enabled to "build up themselves [and each other] on their most holy faith," Jude 20. and to "consider *one another*, to provoke unto love and good works," Heb. x. 24

The regularity and order, which should be observed in every solemn meeting, requires, that one of the band should be the leader, to open and close the ordinance with singing, and prayer, though all may be here considered nearly upon an equality. Each

must be at full liberty to follow the leader in prayer, whenever they kneel down together before God.

In large societies, all the members of those little bands are to meet together once a week with the preacher, and to spend an hour in speaking their experience one after another, as in our love-feasts: and these meetings have been rendered a great blessing to many.

In very large societies, there should be a quarterly love-feast for the bands, as well as for the whole society (which always includes the members of the bands.)

Wherever also it is practicable, there should be formed a *select society* chosen out of the members of the bands. This should be composed of believers who enjoy the perfect love of God, or who are earnestly seeking that great blessing. In London, Bristol, &c. &c. in Europe, and in New-York, &c. on this continent, these select societies have been very profitable. They also meet once a week for an hour, and the preacher presides among them. Each member is at liberty to speak his or her experience, the preacher giving such advice respecting the grand point their souls are aiming at, as he sees expedient.

Thus does our economy by its prudential ordinances, under the grace of God, tend to raise the members of our society from one degree of grace to another. And we have invariably observed, that where these meetings of the bands have been kept up in their life and power, the revival of the work of God has been manifest both in the addition of members to the society, and in the deepening of the life of God in general.

We earnestly wish, that our elders, deacons and preachers be peculiarly attentive to these blessed ordinances in their respective spheres of action. They probably may find earnest believers in almost every circuit, who will be willing to meet in band, if properly advised and encouraged. And when many of these bands are formed, the other meetings may easily be established and regulated. And we believe, hardly any thing will promote the general work more than this.

The propriety of separating the men and women in these bands, must be evident to every one who considers the account here given of this means of grace. The separating of the married and single arises from the peculiar circumstances in which they are situated, and from the closer union which is likely to subsist between those who are circumstanced alike. Widowers or widows may have their choice of meeting either with the married or the single, unless a band can be formed of them alone respectively.

The *social principle* is one of the grand springs in the soul of man. It was not the design of christianity to annihilate this principle, but the very contrary—to improve it, to spiritualize it, and strengthen it. O then let us exercise it in spiritual intercourse—

as we well know that one part of our heavenly felicity will flow from friendship and union with our brethren the redeemed of the Lord to all eternity! Gal. vi. 2. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." 1 Cor. xii. 26, 27. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Phil. ii. 1, 2. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." We have perhaps one hundred thousand believers in our church throughout the world; and if all were thus of one accord, "walking by the same rule, minding the same thing." Phil. iii. 16. What a glorious church should we make; and God would hear our prayers, and look down upon us with the same delight, as if we were all assembled in the same room, or in the same temple.

Observe, here is nothing of auricular confession or priestly absolution: the whole is the fruit of holy confidence and christian love.

The directions for the bands are included in the rules of the society, and have been already considered, excepting the last, "To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year." In every thing the true believer should be a pattern of piety and crucifixion to the world. The times of abstinence are therefore fixed, as being more easily observed than if they were uncertain; that at all events the disciple of Christ may keep his body under, and bring it into subjection.

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the Privileges granted to serious Persons who are not of the Society.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the society?

*Ans.* At every other meeting of the society in every place, let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same persons not above twice or thrice.

*Quest. 2.* How often shall we permit strangers to be present at our love-feasts?

among the people; and to afford them all necessary information in writing or otherwise concerning the temporal affairs of the circuit. 9. He is to keep the registers. Lastly, He is to be ready to promote the work of God in every thing which relates to his office, under the direction of the travelling ministers and preachers of his circuit. When we consider all these branches of his charge, we may truly say, that his office is essential to the good order of the society, and highly honourable in the church of God.

In each large society, there are generally two or four stewards of that particular society, for the management of its temporal concerns. These are appointed as well as the circuit-stewards, by the preacher who has the charge of the circuit. He is himself to have as little as possible to do with temporal affairs, but has the appointment of the officers of the society invested in him, as being likely to be the best judge of the society at large, and of each member in particular. Nevertheless, he is to advise with the quarterly-meeting on the appointment of *circuit-stewards*, and with the leaders of each society respectively on the appointment of *society-stewards*.

Prov. xxviii. 20. "A faithful man shall abound with blessings." 1 Cor. iv. 2. "It is required in stewards, that they be found faithful." See also James i. 27. and Matt. v. 9.

## SECTION VI.

### *Of unlawful Marriages.*

*Quest. 1.* **D**O we observe any evil which has prevailed among our societies with respect to marriage.

*Ans.* Many of our members have married with *unawakened* persons. This has produced bad effects; they have been either hindered for life, or have turned back to perdition.

*Quest. 2.* What can be done to put a stop to this?

*Ans.* 1. Let every preacher publicly enforce the apostle's caution, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

2. Let him openly declare, whoever does this, will be expelled the society.

3. When any such is expelled, let a suitable exhortation be subjoined.

4. Let all be exhorted to take no step in so weighty a matter, without advising with the most serious of their brethren.

*Quest.* 3. Ought any woman to marry without the consent of her parents?

*Ans.* In general she ought not. Yet there may be exceptions. For if, 1. A woman be under the necessity of marrying: If, 2. Her parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any christian: Then she may, nay, ought to marry without their consent. Yet even then a Methodist preacher ought not to be married to her.

*N. B.* By the word *unawakened*, as used above, we mean one whom we could not in conscience admit into society. We do not prohibit our people from marrying persons who are not of our society, provided, such persons have the form, and are seeking the power of godliness; but if they marry persons who do not come up to this description, we shall be obliged to purge our society of them: And even in a doubtful case, the member of our society shall be put back upon trial.

## N O T E S.

We are well assured that few things have been more pernicious to the work of God, than the marriage of the children of God with the children of this world. We therefore think ourselves obliged to bear our testimony, both in doctrine and discipline, against so great an evil. We have added the explication in the nota bene, hoping that thereby the preachers who have the oversight of circuits, will be easily enabled to determine on every point which may come before them, to the satisfaction of the truly pious, and to the prevention of a practice so exceedingly injurious to vital religion.

We need only add a few texts out of the word of God for the confirmation of it. Gen. vi. 1—7. "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them; that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in

those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them: the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping things, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them." We have given this long quotation, as it evidently shews, that one grand cause of the universal and entire depravity of the human race just before the deluge, and of the universal deluge itself, was the intermixture by marriage of the children of God with the children of this world. Gen. xxiv. 2—4. "And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house,—I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." xxvii. 46. "And Rebeckah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" xxviii. 1. "And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." Ver. 6—9. "When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him, he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; and that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; and Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father: Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, &c." Esau therefore married his *first cousin*. But did he please Isaac thereby? No, nor God. Isaac wanted his sons to marry those, who sincerely waited for the Messiah, the promised seed of the woman. See Gen. iii. 15. Matt. xix. 5, 6. "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be *one flesh*. Wherefore they are no more twain, but *one flesh*." See also Gen. ii. 24. and Eph. v. 31. 2 Cor. vi. 14—18. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said,

I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God; and they shall be my people. *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*"

## SECTION VII.

### *Of Dress.*

*Quest* **S**HOULD we insist on the rules concerning dress?

*Ans.* By all means. This is no time to give any encouragement to superfluity of apparel. Therefore give no tickets to any, till they have left off superfluous ornaments. In order to this, 1. Let every one who has the charge of a circuit, read the thoughts upon dress, at least once a year in every large society. 2. In visiting the classes, be very mild, but very strict. 3. Allow of no exempt case: Better one suffer than many. 4. Give no tickets to any that wear high heads, enormous bonnets, ruffles, or rings.

### N O T E S.

As our one aim, in all our economy and ministerial labours, is to raise a *holy people*, crucified to the world, and alive to God, we cannot allow of any thing which has an immediate tendency to defeat our main design, and to strengthen and puff up the carnal mind. Few things, perhaps, have a greater tendency to this than gay apparel, which is expressly and repeatedly forbidden by the scriptures. We endeavour to follow the Word of God; and whilst we have *that* on our side, we must go on, and leave all consequences to the Lord. 1 Tim. ii. 8—10. "I will—in like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness and sobriety: *not with broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but* (which becometh women professing godliness) *with good works.*" 1 Pet. iii. 3—5. "Whose adorning, let it not be *that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the

sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, *the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves,*" &c. *Isai. iii. 26—24.* "Moreover, the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking, and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore, the LORD will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion.—In that day the LORD will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head-bands, and the tablets, and the ear-rings, the rings, and nose-jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well-set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty." In this last quotation we have, 1. the crimes of luxury and wanton haughtiness described; and, 2. the punishment denounced, with which God would pursue these crimes. There is a peculiar emphasis in referring these vices of haughtiness, luxury, wantonness, and the love of superfluous ornament, to the *daughters of Sion*, that is, to the matrons and virgins of the holy city, chosen by God the hater of luxury and vanity; a mountain and city, which those *daughters* of Abraham inhabited, whom, above all others, *outward adorning* became not;—the *plaining of the hair*, &c. but *the hidden man of the heart*, modesty and humility.

## S E C T I O N VIII.

*Of bringing to Trial, finding Guilty, and re-proving, suspending, or excluding disorderly Persons from Society and Church Privileges.*

*Quest. HOW shall a suspected member be brought to trial?*

*Ans. Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a bishop, elder, deacon, or preacher, in the following manner; Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face:*



but if this cannot be done, let the next best evidence be procured. If the accused person be found guilty, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of wrath and hell, let the minister or preacher who has the charge of the circuit, expel him. If he evade a trial by absenting himself after sufficient notice given him, and the circumstances of the accusation be strong and presumptive, let him be esteemed as guilty, and be accordingly excluded. Witnesses from without, shall not be rejected.

But in cases of neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulging sinful tempers or words, or disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, —First, let private reproof be given by a preacher or leader; and if there be an acknowledgement of the fault and proper humiliation, the person may remain on trial. On a second offence, the preacher or leader may take one or two faithful friends. On a third offence, let the case be brought before the society or a select number; and if there be no sign of real humiliation, the offender must be cut off.

If there be a murmur or complaint from any excluded person in any of the above-mentioned instances, that justice has not been done, he shall be allowed an appeal to the next quarterly meeting; and the majority of the ministers, travelling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards and leaders present, shall finally determine the case.

After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons shall have no privileges of society or of sacraments in our church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial.

*N. B.* If a member of our church shall be clearly convicted of endeavouring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline, such person so offending shall be first re-

proved by the senior minister or preacher of his circuit, and, if he afterwards persist in such pernicious practices, he shall be expelled the society.

## N O T E S.

The present section requires a very full explication : not because scripture and reason do not fully discover to us the truth on the present subject, but because many have objected to our discipline in the instance before us.

The grand point to be determined, is this : whether the final judgment of an offender in respect to both the guilt and the censure, should be invested in the minister, or the people. We shall therefore take a view of this part of our economy, first, in the light of scripture, and, secondly, in that of reason.

First, in the light of scripture. Here we must confine ourselves of course to the New Testament, as living under the christian dispensation. 1. The first scripture we shall consider is the declaration of our Saviour in Matt. xviii. 15—17. " Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church ; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." These words were addressed to the apostles, and through them to all the ministers of Christ to the end of the world. This is evident from the words immediately following the quotation, and which are a continuation of the same paragraph, and could not belong to the private members of a church.

The first step then which is to be taken, is to tell the offender of his fault in private without any witness. Here is the *secret* reproof of the minister himself. But if he will not hear and amend, the second step is, that the minister take with him two or three witnesses. Here is the reproof of the minister *before witnesses*. " And if he shall neglect to hear them," shall these two or three witnesses proceed to exclude him? No : they have no such authority : but " tell it unto the church." This is the third step. Has the church then any authority to punish him? No : their whole authority lies in advising and reproving him. " But if," after such advice and reproof, " he neglect to hear the church, let him be UNTO THEE as an heathen man and a publican. Can any one imagine that the minister *only* is to treat the offender thus ; and that the rest of the church are to give him the right hand of fellowship? This cannot be. The minister is undoubtedly to exclude

him from the communion of the church. This is the last step. Then follow immediately those words of our Lord, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven: which words, as we before observed, confine the power to ministers, whose church-censures as far as they are consistent with the word of God (for we cannot suppose the authority goes further) shall be confirmed and supported in heaven: and the faithful ministers of God, who have been more or less invested with the superintendency of the church have found this promise verified. The latter words cannot be supposed to relate to an eternal exclusion from glory, for that would preclude the necessity of the day of judgment in respect to those so excommunicated. But we repeat, Here is not a word said of the church's authority either to judge or to censure. On the contrary, the whole authority is expressly delivered into the hands of the minister.

But we may add, that this passage speaks of offences, which have not yet brought a public disgrace on the church of God. The church or society of which the offender is a member, is not even supposed to be generally acquainted with the fault till after the failure of the first and second attempt for his reformation. Surely, if the offence be of a scandalous nature, and has already disgraced the cause of God by its public notoriety, the offender ought to be *immediately* removed, after clear conviction, for the honour of God and his cause: much more so still, if the offender has been found guilty of some *gross* crime. For could any one think of having communion with a murderer, adulterer, or thief, even for a moment, though the crime was not known to any but the offender and himself: and so we may observe of many other crimes.

But it may be urged, that the offence must first be mentioned to the church, before the offender can be scripturally excluded. "Tell it to the church," says our Lord. And so we do. It is merely for the sake of convenience, that in *large* societies we tell it only to a committee or representation of the society, or do abundantly more, even make them the witnesses of the whole trial. But if such societies were to desire it, we would tell the whole unto the church at large. But still we must declare, from the plain sense of the word of God, that our Lord invests the minister with the whole authority both of judgment and censure.

2. Another scripture worthy of consideration on this subject, is 1 Cor. v. 1—5. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named amongst the gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, might be taken away from among you. For I verily as absent in body, but *present in spirit*, HAVE

~~JUDGED~~ *already*, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and *my Spirit*, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord Jesus." It is evident, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the apostle, being fully persuaded of the truth of the fact, took upon himself the whole business of deciding on the guilt and punishment of the incestuous Corinthian. "*I, as present in Spirit,*" says he, "*have judged already.*" He here acts as their chief minister, and requires them to consider *his Spirit present with them*, as he could not be so personally. They were not to meet, in order to consult whether the offender should be put away or not, but merely to put him from among them, because the apostle was absent.

It may here be asked, Why did not the chief resident minister of the church of Corinth put away the incestuous person, if he possessed the authority? We answer, because he was unfaithful. He connived at this enormous crime, either because he did not love the cause of holiness which is the cause of God, or because he gave way to the evil solicitations of the people. This is evident from those words in the passage before us, "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed, *might be taken away* from among you." He does not say, Ye have not mourned *that you did not put away* this great offender, but "*that he might be taken away* from among you." But as the person who had the immediate authority *did not take the offender away* from among them, St. Paul, as the apostle of the Gentiles, steps into the minister's place, and cuts him off.

It might also be urged, that it was *an apostle* who thus acted: and we should be ready to admit this as an exempt case, if it were not agreeable to the authority given by Christ himself to his ministers—an authority, the due exercise of which by his ministers our Lord highly approves of, and the neglect of which he strongly condemns, as we shall now proceed to shew.

3. Rev. ii. 1, 2. "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right-hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and *how thou canst not bear them which are evil.*" With what high approbation does our Lord here express himself concerning the determined opposition of the chief minister of the church of Ephesus to all immoral professors. "Thou canst not bear them which are evil." But if this minister had only a single vote against immoral practices in the church, or was only chairman in the meetings of the church, to examine into the conduct of offenders or supposed offenders, is it likely that our Lord would have given so high an

encomium, so strong a commendation of the conduct of the minister in this respect? Would he not at least have said something in commendation of the church itself, without whom in this instance, if the power of censure lay in them, the minister would be almost a cypher? For the minister, in such case, would have little to do in the business, unless as a complainant or informer. Besides, our Lord adds in the 2d verse, "And *thou* hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars." And again, ver. 6. "But this *thou* hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate." From the whole of which it appears, that the minister was the sole judge both of the morals and doctrines of the church which he superintended, the church not being at all mentioned by our Lord as having any authority in these matters.

4. Rev. ii. 12—15. "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; "These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;—I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate." But why should our Lord *cast all this blame* on the minister *alone* without taking the least notice of the church, *if the power of censure rested in the church*, and not in the minister; or no farther in the minister, than as having a single vote in the church? Is it, we must repeat, at all probable, is it morally possible, that our Lord would have written thus to the angel of the church, if that angel, or chief minister had not possessed authority to cleanse it from the followers of the doctrine of Balaam, and of the Nicolaitans?

5. Rev. ii. 18—20. "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; "These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;—I have a few things against thee, because *thou sufferest* that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." But how could he possibly avoid *suffering* her to remain in the church, if the church possessed the power of censure and excommunication, and was determined to keep her in? Or, how could he possibly have prevented her being turned out, if the church had in it the power of expulsion, and had expelled her?

We may here just observe, that most of the churches of Asia Minor, mentioned in the 2d and 3d chapters of the Revelation, if not all of them, were founded by St. Paul.

6. We shall instance in only two more portions of the word of God on this subject. (1.) Heb. xiii. 7. "Remember them

which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." And (2.) ver. 17. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Observe, [1.] the persons here described as having the rule and a right to obedience and submission, were persons *who had spoken the word of God to the people, and watched over their souls, and consequently were their preachers and pastors*. But, [2.] To suppose that they ruled in the church, and had a claim to obedience and submission, and yet had not the authority of cleansing the church from immoral and heretical persons, would be exceedingly absurd. These last quoted texts are collateral and inferential proofs, the former are expressly so.

2dly. Let us consider the subject in the light of reason. 1. Is there any propriety in constituting a husband the judge of the guilt or innocence of his wife, or the wife of her husband; the parent of his child, or the child of his parent; the brother of his sister, or the sister of her brother, &c. Would not natural affection almost unavoidably move them in such cases to be partial to each other? Might not resentment move a master to be partial in his judgment against his servant? Might not fear, on the contrary, influence the servant in favour of his master? A long acquaintance also, perhaps even from childhood, has a powerful effect upon the minds of men, and would strongly tempt them to cover sin, to the destruction, not intentionally but eventually, of the work of God. The intermixture of temporal interests would also be a strong motive to induce many to make large allowances for the offender. "My income is small, and my family large: such a one is my customer, and also many of his relations; and shall I vote against him to the injury of my family? Perhaps he may repent, and be better in future. Such a one has obliged me in various respects, and shall I be so ungrateful as to condemn him wholly?" Those who are acquainted with the operations of the human mind, must be very sensible how often these reasonings would warp the minds of the judges, and produce a partiality in their decisions, which would be ruinous in the last degree to the work of God. Additionally to all this, we must recollect, that different countries, and different parts of the same country, are addicted to particular vices: and those are but little acquainted with human nature, who do not know that men are strongly tempted to cover those sins, which they themselves are inwardly inclined to, or which it is their interest to commit. For instance, in a part of the country where the maple-tree grows abundantly, and there are various manufactures of sugar, would not the church be strongly inclined to make large allowances for those who would labour in their sugar camps on the Lord's day?

Let those answer, who are acquainted with the nature of that manufacture. Again, In a part of the country, where the buying the souls and bodies of men is a common practice, would not many in the church be tempted to favour those who were guilty of that practice, because they themselves might be the next to fall into the snare? Yea, we have had proofs of thi — of private members of the church, who have attempted to assume the power, not only of judging or rather clearing the offender, but of *judging the law itself!*

To give therefore the authority of judging and censuring offenders to the private members of a church, would be to form a court which in innumerable instances would have the strongest temptations to partiality. We do not mention this to shew the least disrespect to the private members of our Society: on the contrary, many of them may exceed us in piety and every grace. But it is contrary to all the rules of justice to appoint those to be judges, who may in so many instances be strongly tempted to be partial. At the same time we must observe, that THE WORD OF GOD is that which we principally stand upon, knowing well that every passage in the New-Testament which relates to the present subject, is wholly on our side.

2. Our original design in forming our religious Society renders the existence of this authority in our ministers absolutely necessary: But what was this design? *To raise a holy people.* Our plan of economy shuts us up from the influence of any other motive in respect to our ministerial labours. It is impossible for us to *enrich* ourselves by Methodist-preaching. Again, We bear a constant testimony against *the pleasures* of the world, and therefore should be esteemed, even by our own people, as the greatest of hypocrites, if *we* indulged ourselves in them, and would soon be excluded the connection by the various means of trial to which *all of us* are subject. And *as to honour*, we are almost the only despised people in Christendom, as a religious body. The secondary rank of mankind and the poor are the only persons (with a few exceptions) who receive the Gospel. The rich and great, in general, even those who have not embraced the favourite doctrines of the times, will not submit to the way of the cross, but, on the contrary, look down on the Preachers of it as the greatest enthusiasts. And shall we thus sacrifice all that the world holds dear and at the same time lose the only aim of all our public labours, by false complaisance? No. *We will have a holy people, or none.* In every part of our economy, as well as doctrine, we aim at crucifixion to the world and love to God. *This must be the price of our labours.* We require not riches, honours or pleasure, *but a holy people.* We have a right to dispose of our labours as we please, as far as they respect our fellow-creatures: and *we will not bestow them on any other condition.* If we labour in any place a sufficient time for a

trial, and are not able raise a people devoted to God, we will leave it: we have a right so to do, and none have just ground of complaint. Again, If we have encouragement from any people, but they afterwards deceive us, and return to the world "like the dog to his vomit," (2 Pet. ii. 22.) they have broken the condition on which we labour among them; we have nothing more to do with them; and if we continue in that place, it is for the sake of others and not of them. But, blessed be God, if we meet sometimes with discouragements in this respect, they are amply compensated by the increase of vital godliness. We love our people; and they in general amply repay our labours by their holy conversation. They are the joy of our hearts, and will, we trust, be our crown of rejoicing on the great day. But still we must observe, that our immoveable support, on which we rest our sentiments upon this subject, is THE WORD OF GOD. And we may add, that the present point has been seldom disputed, as far as we know, by any, except those who have been disaffected to us, or have openly separated from us.

An appeal is allowed in all the cases mentioned in this section, to the following quarterly meeting. For though the power of appeal be not mentioned in the last clause, which relates to the sowing of dissensions, yet it certainly is implied. Our work is at present in its infancy in comparison to what, we trust, it will be through the blessing of God. Our ministers, who have the charge of circuits may not be always so aged and experienced as we might wish them to be: the appeal to the quarterly meeting is therefore allowed to remedy this defect. And this no one can object to. No one, we think, can imagine, that the members of a class, or the members of the largest society, would form so respectable or so impartial a court of judicature, as the presiding elder, the travelling and local preachers, and the leaders and stewards of *the whole circuit*. But the point is quite out of the reach of debate in respect to those who believe the sacred writings and sincerely reverence them. The New-Testament determines beyond a doubt, that judgment and censure in the cases before us, shall be in the minister: nor could we justify our conduct in investing the quarterly meeting with the authority of receiving and determining appeals, if it were not almost entirely composed of men who are more or less engaged in the ministry of the word, the stewards being the only exceptions.

We shall now just add some portions of sacred writ, in relation to the immoralities which are referred to in this section, that our ministers who have the oversight of circuits may have them under their eye. Matt. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies." Luke vi. 44, 45. "*Every tree is known by his own fruit.*"

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil trea-



fure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." See also Matt. xii. 35. Mark vii. 21, 22. " From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Gal. v. 19—21. " Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Eph. v. 5—8. " This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Rev. xxi. 8. " The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." xxii. 14, 15. " Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." For scripture references against divisions and sowing dissensions, see the notes on the 22d article of religion.

## SECTION IX.

### *Of Slavery.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT regulations shall be made for the extirpation of the crying evil of African slavery?

*Ans.* 1. We declare, that we are more than ever convinced of the great evil of the African slavery which still exists in these United States; and do most earnestly recommend to the yearly conferences, quarterly meetings, and to those who have the oversight of districts and circuits, to be exceedingly cautious what persons they

admit to official stations in our church; and in the case of future admission to official stations, to require such security of those who hold slaves, for the emancipation of them, immediately or gradually, as the laws of the states respectively, and the circumstances of the case will admit: and we do fully authorise all the yearly conferences to make whatever regulations they judge proper, in the present case, respecting the admission of persons to official stations in our church.

2. No slave-holder shall be received into society, till the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit, has spoken to him freely and faithfully on the subject of slavery.

3. Every member of the society who sells a slave, shall immediately, after full proof, be excluded the society. And if any member of our society purchase a slave, the ensuing quarterly meeting shall determine on the number of years, in which the slave so purchased would work out the price of his purchase. And the person so purchasing, shall immediately after such determination, execute a legal instrument for the manumission of such slave, at the expiration of the term determined by the quarterly meeting. And in default of his executing such instrument of manumission, or on his refusal to submit his case to the judgment of the quarterly meeting, such member shall be excluded the society. *Provided also,* That in the case of a female slave, it shall be inserted in the aforesaid instrument of manumission, that all her children who shall be born during the years of her servitude, shall be free at the following times, namely—every female child at the age of twenty-one, and every male child at the age of twenty-five.—*Nevertheless,* if the member of our society, executing the said instrument of manumission, judge it proper, he may fix the times of manumission of the children of the female slaves before mentioned, at an earlier age than that which is prescribed above.

4. The preachers and other members of our society are requested to consider the subject of negro-slavery

with deep attention, till the ensuing general conference; and that they impart to the general conference, through the medium of the yearly conferences, or otherwise, any important thoughts upon the subject, that the conference may have full light, in order to take further steps towards the eradicating this enormous evil from that part of the church of God to which they are united.

## S E C T I O N X.

### *Of the Sale and Use of Spirituous Liquors.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT directions shall be given concerning the sale and use of spirituous liquors?

*Answ.* If any member of our society retail or give spirituous liquors, and any thing disorderly be transacted under his roof on this account, the preacher who has the oversight of the circuit shall proceed against him as in the case of other immoralities; and the person accused shall be cleared, censured, suspended or excluded according to his conduct, as on other charges of immorality.

## N O T E S.

Far be it from us to wish or endeavour to intrude upon the proper religious or civil liberty of any of our people. But the retailing of spirituous liquors, and giving drams to customers, when they call at the stores, are such prevalent customs at present, and are productive of so many evils, that we judge it our indispensable duty to form a regulation against them.—The cause of God, which we prefer to every other consideration under heaven, absolutely requires us to step forth with humble boldness in this respect.

## C H A P. III.



## S E C T I O N I.

*Of building Churches, and the Order to be observed therein.*

*Quest. 1.* **I**S any thing advisable in regard to building?

*Ans. 1.* Let all our churches be built plain and decent; but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable: otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist-discipline, if not doctrine too.

2. No person shall be eligible as a trustee to any of our churches or schools, who is not a regular member of our society.

3. No person who is a trustee, shall be ejected while he is in joint security for money, unless such relief be given him as is demanded, or the creditor will accept.

*Quest. 2.* Is there any exception to the rule, "Let the men and women sit apart?"

*Ans.* There is no exception. Let them sit apart in all our churches.

*Quest. 3.* Is there not a great indecency sometimes practised amongst us, viz. talking in the congregation before and after service? How shall this be cured?

*Ans.* Let all the ministers and preachers join as one man, and enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after service; and strongly exhort those that are concerned, to do it no more. In three months, if we are in earnest, this vile practice will be banished out of every Methodist congregation. Let none stop till he has carried his point.

*Quest. 4.* What shall be done for the security of our preaching-houses, and the premises belonging thereto?

*Ans.* Let the following plan of a deed of settlement, be brought into effect in all possible cases, and as far as the laws of the states respectively will admit of it, viz.

**T**HIS INDENTURE, made this                      day of  
in the year of our Lord one thousand  
hundred, and                      between  
of the                      in the state of                      (if the grant-  
or be married, insert the name of his wife) of the  
one part, and                      trustees, in trust for the uses  
and purposes herein after-mentioned, all of the  
in the state of                      aforesaid, of the other part,  
**WITNESSETH**, that the said                      (if married  
insert the name of his wife) for and in consideration  
of the sum of                      pounds, specie, to                      in hand  
paid, at and upon the sealing and delivery of these  
presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged,  
hath (or have) given, granted, bargained, sold, releas-  
ed, confirmed, and conveyed, and by these presents  
doth (or do) give, grant, bargain, sell, release, con-  
firm, and convey unto them, the said                      and their  
successors (trustees, in trust for the uses and purposes  
herein after mentioned and declared) all the estate,  
right, title, interest, property, claim, and demand what-  
soever, either in law or equity, which he the said  
(if married, here insert the name of his wife) hath  
(or have) in, to, or upon all and singular a certain lot  
or piece of ground, situate, lying, and being in the  
and state aforesaid, bounded and butted as  
follows, to wit, (here insert the several courses and  
distances of the ground to the place of beginning) con-  
taining and laid out for                      acres of ground, to-  
gether with all and singular the houses, woods, waters,  
ways, privileges, and appurtenances thereto belonging,

or in any wise appertaining: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD all and singular the above mentioned and described lot or piece of ground, situate, lying, and being as aforesaid, together with all and singular the houses, woods, waters, ways, and privileges thereto belonging, or in anywise appertaining unto them the said

and their successors in office, for ever, in trust, that they shall erect and build, or cause to be erected and built thereon, a house or place of worship, for the use of the members of the Methodist episcopal church in the United States of America, according to the rules and discipline which from time to time may be agreed upon and adopted by the ministers and preachers of the said church, at their general conferences in the United States of America; and in future trust and confidence that they shall at all times, for ever hereafter, permit such ministers and preachers, belonging to the said church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the general conferences of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist episcopal church, or by the yearly conferences authorized by the said general conference, and none others, to preach and expound God's holy word therein; and in further trust and confidence, that as often as any one or more of the trustees herein before mentioned, shall die, or cease to be a member or members of the said church, according to the rules and discipline as aforesaid, then and in such case, it shall be the duty of the stationed minister or preacher (authorized as aforesaid) who shall have the pastoral charge of the members of the said church, to call a meeting of the remaining trustees, as soon as conveniently may be; and when so met, the said minister or preacher shall proceed to nominate one or more persons to fill the place or places of him or them whose office or offices has (or have) been vacated as aforesaid. *Provided*, The person or persons so nominated, shall have been one year a member or members of the said church immediately preceding such nomination, and of at least twenty-one years of age; and the said trust-

tees, so assembled, shall proceed to elect, and by a majority of votes appoint, the person or persons so nominated to fill such vacancy or vacancies, in order to keep up the number of nine trustees for ever; and in case of an equal number of votes for and against the said nomination, the stationed minister or preacher shall have the casting vote.

*Provided nevertheless,* That if the said trustees or any of them, or their successors, have advanced, or shall advance any sum or sums of money, or are or shall be responsible for any sum or sums of money, on account of the said premises, and they the said trustees, or their successors, be obliged to pay the said sum or sums of money, they, or a majority of them, shall be authorized to raise the said sum or sums of money, by a mortgage on the said premises, or by selling the said premises, after notice given to the pastor or preacher who has the oversight of the congregation attending divine service on the said premises, if the money due be not paid to the said trustees, or their successors, within one year after such notice given: And if such sale take place, the said trustees or their successors, after paying the debt and all other expences which are due, from the money arising from such sale, shall deposit the remainder of the money produced by the said sale, in the hands of the steward or stewards of the society belonging to, or attending divine service on the said premises; which surplus of the produce of such sale, so deposited in the hands of the said steward or stewards, shall be at the disposal of the next yearly conference authorized as aforesaid; which said yearly conference shall dispose of the said money, according to the best of their judgment, for the use of the said society. And the said doth by these presents warrant, and for ever defend, all and singular the before mentioned and described lot or piece of ground, with the appurtenances thereto belonging, unto them the said and their successors, chosen and appointed as aforesaid, from the claim or claims of him the said

his heirs and assigns, and from the claim or claims of all persons whatever.

In testimony whereof, the said (if married insert the name of his wife) have hereto set their hands and seals, the day and year aforesaid.

Sealed and delivered in the }  
presence of us,  
(Two witnesses.)

Grantor's (L. S.)  
his wife's (L. S.)

Received, the day of the date of the above }  
written indenture, the consideration there- }  
in mentioned, in full.

Witnesses. }

Grantor's (L. S.)

County, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the  
day of in the year of our Lord one  
thousand personally appeared before  
me, one of the justice's of the peace, in and  
for the county of and state of  
the within named the grantor (if  
married insert the name of his wife) and ac-  
knowledged the within deed of trust to be their  
act and deed, for the uses and purposes therein  
mentioned and declared; and she the said  
wife of the said being separate and apart  
from her said husband, by me examined, declar-  
ed that she made the same acknowledgment,  
freely and with her own consent, without be-  
ing induced thereto through fear or threats of  
her said husband. In testimony whereof, I  
have hereto set my hand and seal, the day and  
year first above written.

Here the justice's name. (L. S.)

N. B. 1. It is necessary that all our deeds should  
be recorded after execution, for prudential as well as  
legal reasons.



2. Let nine trustees be appointed for preaching houses, where proper persons can be procured; otherwise seven, or five.

## N O T E S.

1. We have already spoken on the duty of raising houses for the worship of God, in our notes on the 10th section of the 1st chapter.

We however think it our duty to remark concerning the passage which relates to *rich men*, that those rich men who have joined us in America, have shewn no desire at all to govern us: they have been neither haughty nor overbearing. The latter part therefore of the answer to the first question probably refers to some rich people in other parts of the world. Matt. xix. 26. "Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." See also Mark x. 27. and Luke xviii. 27.

2. "The sitting of men and women apart" was the universal practice in the primitive church. A general mixture of the sexes in places of divine worship is obviously improper. 1 Cor. xiv. 40. "Let all things be done decently, and in order."

3. Sufficient advice is given in the answer to the third question on the *indecenty* there condemned. Holiness becomes the house of the Lord. We go there to speak to God, and hear his word, and not to converse with each other. Eccles. v. 1. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil."

4. In respect to the deed of settlement, we would observe, that the union of the Methodist society, through the states, requires one general deed, for the settlement of our preaching houses and the premises belonging thereto. In the above plan of settlement we have given to the trustees an authority and security, they never possessed by virtue of our former deeds, namely, the power of mortgaging or selling the premises in the cases and manner above mentioned. By which we manifest to the whole world, that the property of the preaching houses will not be invested in the general conference. But the preservation of our union and the progress of the work of God indispensably require, that the free and full use of the pulpits should be in the hands of the general conference, and the yearly conferences authorised by them. Of course, the travelling preachers, who are in full connection, assembled in their conferences, are the patrons of the pulpits of our churches. And this was absolutely necessary to give a clear, legal specification in the deed. If the local preachers, stewards,

and leaders (who have an undoubted right to preach, meet their classes, &c. in the preaching houses at due time, according to the form of discipline) were specified, it would be necessary to add a description of their orders; which would throw such obscurity upon the whole, that a court of justice would either reject the deed, or be at a loss to determine concerning the little peculiarities of our form of discipline. But we do hereby publicly declare, that we have no design of limiting, in the least degree, the privileges of any of the public officers of our society, but by this deed solely intend to preserve the property of our church by such a clear, simple specification, as shall be fully and easily cognizable by the laws.

## S E C T I O N II.

### *Of the Printing of Books, and the Application of the Profits arising therefrom.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HO is employed to manage the printing business?

*Ans.* John Dickins.

*Quest. 2.* What allowances shall be paid him annually for his services?

*Ans.* 1. 200 Dollars, for a dwelling-house and for a book-room.

2. 80 Dollars for a boy.

3. 53 Dollars  $\frac{1}{3}$ , for fire-wood: and,

4. 333 Dollars, to clothe and feed himself, his wife, and his children. In all, 666 dollars  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

*Quest. 3.* What powers shall be granted him?

*Ans.* 1. To regulate the publications according to the state of the finances.

2. To complain to the yearly conference, if any preachers shall neglect to make due payment for books.

*Quest. 4.* What sum of money shall be allowed distressed preachers out of the book-fund, till the next general conference?

*Ans.* 266 dollars and  $\frac{1}{3}$  per annum.

*Quest. 5.* How is the money mentioned above, for the benefit of distressed preachers, to be drawn out of the book-fund?

*Ans.* By the bishop, according to the united judgment of himself and the yearly conferences.

*Quest.* 6. In what manner shall the accounts of the general book-steward be examined?

*Ans.* The Philadelphia conference shall from year to year appoint a committee, who shall examine quarterly his receipts and disbursements and other accounts.

*Quest.* 7. What mode shall be struck out for the recovery of bad or suspected book-debts?

*Ans.* 1. Let every yearly conference appoint a committee or committees for the examination of the accounts of the travelling book-stewards in their respective districts.

2. Let every presiding elder, and every preacher who has the oversight of a circuit, do every thing in their power to recover all the debts in their circuit or district, and also all books which may remain in the hands of persons who shall have resigned, or been withdrawn from the office of a travelling book-steward.

*Quest.* 8. Shall any drafts be made on the book-fund before all its debts are discharged?

*Ans.* There shall be none, till the debts are discharged, except in the case of distressed travelling preachers.

*Quest.* 9. What directions shall be given concerning the regulation of our presses?

*Ans.* The general book-steward shall print no books or tracts of any kind, without the consent of a bishop and two-thirds of the Philadelphia conference.

*Quest.* 10. Will the conference recommend, and engage to promote the publication of a Magazine, intitled *The Methodist Magazine*, which shall consist of compilations from the British magazines, and of original accounts of the experience of pious persons, and shall be published in monthly numbers?

*Ans.* The conference will recommend such a magazine, and desire that it may be printed.

## N O T E S.

The propagation of religious knowledge by means of the press, is next in importance to the preaching of the gospel. To supply the people, therefore, with the most pious and useful books, in order that they may fill up their leisure hours in the most profitable ways, is an object worthy the deepest attention of their pastors. On this account we are determined to move in the most cautious manner in respect to our publications. We have a great esteem for our general book-steward, and are much obliged to him for his fidelity and usefulness in his important office: but we shall in future submit our publications to the judgment of no single person. The books of infidelity and profaneness with which the states at present abound, demand our strongest exertions to counteract their pernicious influence: and every step shall be taken, which is consistent with our finances, to furnish our friends, from time to time, with the most useful treatises on every branch of religious knowledge. And the consideration that all the profits shall be lodged in our chartered fund for the benefit of the distressed preachers, both travelling and superannuated, will, we trust, prove a considerable additional inducement to our brethren, to purchase our books.

## S E C T I O N III.

*The plan of Education recommended to all our  
Seminaries of Learning.*

*To the Public, and to the Members of our Society in particular.*

THE first object we recommend, is to form the minds of the youth, through Divine aid, to wisdom and holiness; instilling into their tender minds the principles of true religion, speculative, experimental, and practical, and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational scriptural christians. For this purpose we recommend that not only the masters, but also our elders, deacons, and preachers, embrace every opportunity of instructing the students in the great branches of the christian religion.

It is also our particular desire, that all who shall be educated in Methodist seminaries, be kept at the utmost distance, as from vice in general, so in particular, from softness and effeminacy of manners.

The masters, therefore, should inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning; and we are convinced by constant observation and experience, that this is of vast importance both to body and mind. It is of admirable use, either for preserving a good, or improving a bad, constitution. It is of peculiar service in all nervous complaints, both in preventing and removing them. And by thus strengthening the various organs of the body, it enables the mind to put forth its utmost exertions.

On the same principle the masters should prohibit *play* in the strongest terms; and in this we have the two greatest writers on the subject which perhaps any age has produced (Mr. Locke and Mr. Rousseau) of our sentiments; for though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious system, yet his wisdom in other respects, and extensive genius, are indisputably acknowledged. The employments which we would recommend for the recreation of the students, are such as are of the greatest public utility, *agriculture* and *architecture*; studies more especially necessary for a new settled country; and of consequence the instructing of youth in all the practical branches of those important arts, will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to their country. Agreeably to this idea, the greatest statesman that perhaps ever shone in the annals of history, *Peter* the Russian emperor, who was deservedly stiled *the Great*, disdained not to stoop to the employment of a *ship-carpenter*. Nor was it rare, during the purest times of the Roman republic, to see the conquerors of nations and deliverers of their country, return with all simplicity and cheerfulness to the exercise of the plough. In conformity to this sentiment, one of the completest poetic pieces of antiquity (the *Georgics* of *Virgil*) is

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written on the subject of husbandry ; by the perusal of which, and submission to the above regulations, the students may delightfully unite the theory and the practice together. We say *delightfully*, for we are far from wishing that these employments should be turned into drudgery or slavery, but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body.

In teaching the languages, care should be taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. And the utmost caution should be used, that nothing immodest should be found in any of their books.

But this is not all. We should take care that the books be not only inoffensive, but useful ; that they contain as much strong *sense*, and as much *genuine morality* as possible : As far, therefore, as is consistent with the foregoing observations, a choice and universal library should be provided for the use of the students, according to their finances : and on this plan, we trust that our seminaries of learning will in time send forth men who will be blessings to their country in every laudable office and employment of life, thereby uniting the two greatest ornaments of intelligent beings, which are too often separated, *deep learning* and *genuine religion*.

The rules and regulations with which you are here presented, have been weighed and digested in our conferences : But we also submit them to your judgment.

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### GENERAL RULES proposed for the Methodist Seminaries of Learning.

1. THE students shall rise at five o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, at the ringing of a bell.
2. All the students shall assemble together at six o'clock, for public prayer, except in cases of sickness ; and on any omission, shall be responsible to the master.

3. From morning prayer till seven, they shall be allowed to recreate themselves as is hereafter directed.

4. At seven they shall breakfast.

5. From eight till twelve, they are to be closely kept at their respective studies.

6. From twelve to three, they are to employ themselves in recreation and dining—Dinner to be ready at one o'clock.

7. From three till six, they are again to be kept closely to their studies.

8. At six they shall sup.

9. At seven there shall be public prayer.

10. From evening prayer till bed-time, they shall be allowed recreation.

11. They shall all be in bed at nine o'clock, without fail.

12. Their recreations shall be gardening, walking, riding, and bathing, without doors; and the carpenter's, joiner's, cabinet maker's, or turner's business, within doors.

13. A large plot of land shall be appropriated for a garden, and a person skilled in gardening be appointed to overlook the students when employed in that recreation.

14. A convenient bath shall be made for bathing.

15. A master, or some proper person by him appointed, shall be always present at the time of bathing. Only one shall bathe at a time; and no one shall remain in the water above a minute.

16. No student shall be allowed to bathe in the river.

17. A *Taberna Lignaria*\* shall be provided on the premises, with all proper instruments and materials, and a skilful person be employed to overlook the students at this recreation.

18. The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls PLAY. Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety; for those who play when they are young, will play when they are old.

\* A place for working in wood.

19. Each student shall have a bed to himself, wherever he boards.

20. The students shall lie on mattresses, not on feather-beds, because we believe the mattresses to be more healthy.

21. The masters shall strictly examine, from time to time, whether those who board the students (if they board out of the seminary) comply with these rules, as far as they concern them.

22. A skilful physician shall be engaged to attend the students on every emergency, that the parents may be fully assured that proper care shall be taken of the health of their children.

23. The bishops shall examine, by themselves or their delegates, into the progress of all the students in learning, every half year, or oftener if possible.

24. The elders, deacons, and preachers, as often as they visit the seminaries respectively, shall examine the students concerning their knowledge of God and religion.

25. The students shall be divided into proper classes for that purpose.

26. A pupil who has a total incapacity to attain learning, shall, after sufficient trial, be returned to his parents.

27. If a student be convicted of any open sin, he shall, for the first offence, be reproved in private; for the second offence, he shall be reproved in public; and for the third offence, he shall be punished at the discretion of the master.

28. Idleness, or any other fault, may be punished with confinement, according to the discretion of the master.

29. A convenient room shall be set apart as a place of confinement.

## SECTION IV.

### *Of Christian Perfection.*

**L**ET us strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to go on to perfection. That we may all



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 speak the same thing, we ask once for all, Shall we defend this perfection, or give it up? We all agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, properly so called, by the love of God and man filling our heart. Some say, "This cannot be attained till we have been refined by the fire of purgatory." Others, "Nay it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part." But others say, "It may be attained before we die: A moment after is too late." Is it so, or not? We are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death, i. e. from all sinful tempers and desires. The substance then is settled. But as to the circumstances, is the change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. "But should we in preaching insist both on one and the other?" Certainly we should insist on the gradual change; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous change? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? And the rather, because constant experience shews, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their souls; the more careful are they to grow in grace; the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God: (whereas just the contrary effects are observed, whenever this expectation ceases.) They are saved by hope, by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or rather decreases daily. Therefore, whoever would advance the gradual change in believers, should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

#### N O T E S.

In respect to the doctrine of christian perfection we must refer the reader to Mr. Wesley's excellent treatise on that subject.

## SECTION V.

*Against Antinomianism.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT can be done to guard against Antinomianism?

*Ans. 1.* Let all the preachers carefully read over Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Fletcher's tracts. 2. Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, but not in a controversial way. And let them take care to do it in love and gentleness: Not in bitterness, returning railing for railing. 3. Answer all the objections of our people as occasion offers: But take care to do it in a christian temper.

*Quest. 2.* Wherein lies our danger of it?

*Ans. 1.* With regard to man's *faithfulness*, our Lord himself hath taught us to use the expression; therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.

2. With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. Labour, (*ἐργαζέσθαι*) literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. And in fact every believer till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from, life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that "A man is to do nothing in order to justification:" Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should cease from evil, and learn to do well. So God himself teacheth by the prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should do works meet for repentance: And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole affair.

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that *now* believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

2. But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that according to the light he has, feareth God and worketh righteousness.

3. Is this the same with, He that is sincere? Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this salvation by works?

Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

5. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who by their own confession neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this any exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God, and work righteousness?

His own thinking so is no proof. For we know how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

6. Does not talking without proper caution of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing God, according to our works; according to the whole of our present inward tempers, and outward behaviour.

## N O T E S.

The subject of antinomianism has been so fully handled by that great writer, Mr. Fletcher, that we need not enlarge upon it, when it has been so completely considered by him.

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